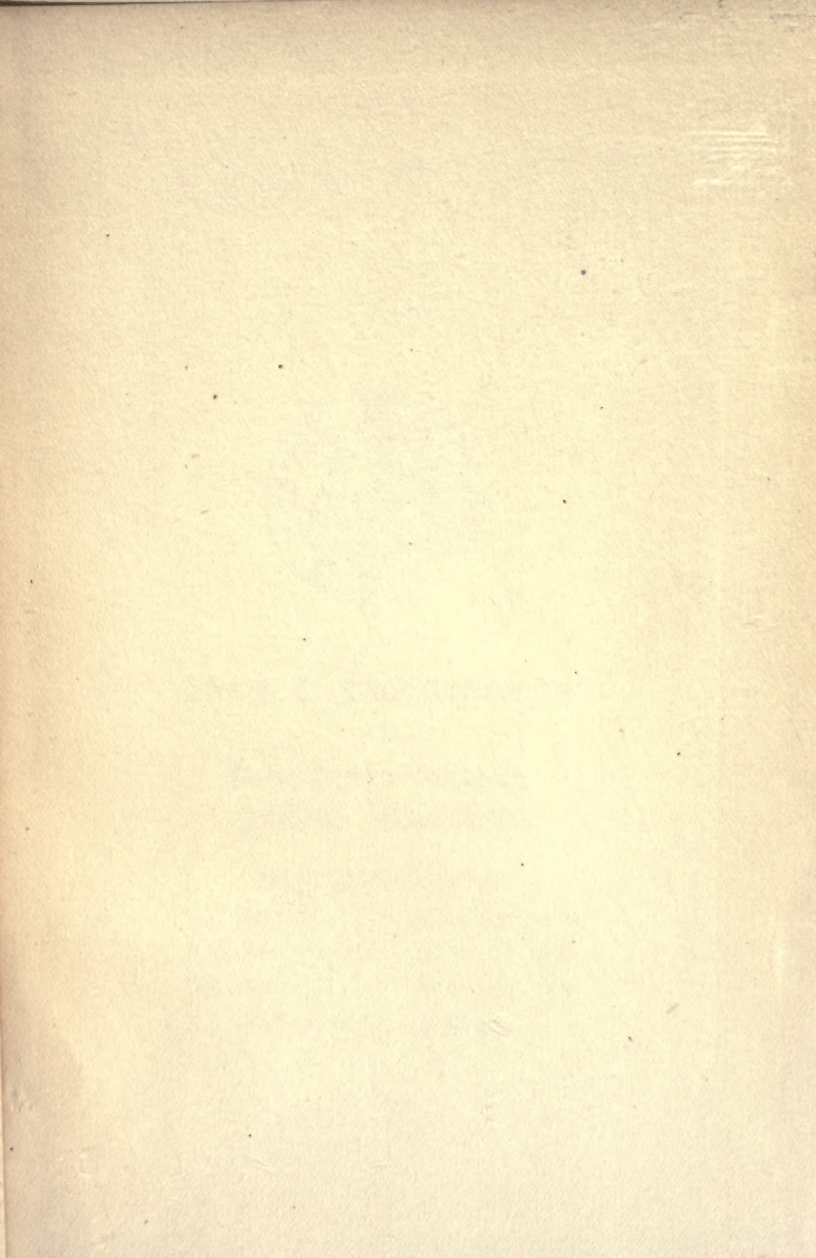


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A HISTORY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE



JOHN MILTON, AT THE AGE OF TEN

From the painting by Cornelius Janssen. Reproduced, by special permission, from the original in the library of J. Pierpont Morgan.

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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PREFACE

In writing this book the author has sought to lay stress on the facts of the history of English literature, rather than on the interpretation of it. The need of the high school pupil would seem to be, first of all, the chief facts, given in a continuous narrative, with important movements, so far as is possible, told in terms of men rather than of ideas. Though a certain amount of æsthetic comment, implied if not stated, is inevitable in any survey of literature which is more than a dictionary of names, the intention of the present writer has been to place the emphasis on men, on what they did, and on how they came to do it — not on what the world thinks of their performance. By such a method the space gained is considerable; there are important facts which cannot be included in a small volume if it is half-full of “interpretation.”

In selecting authors for inclusion the writer has tried to keep in mind the needs of the high school pupil. Detailed mention, therefore, has been given only to those authors whose works the pupil is likely to read. Names of secondary importance to such a pupil have been either left to the chronological lists or given only brief mention in the text. Much space has thus been gained for careful treatment of the important figures. In the chronological tables, together with the lists of books for reading,

advanced students will find suggestions for extended study.

The Appendix contains a chapter on "Literary Forms" and one on "Versification." Hitherto these subjects have usually been confined to rhetoric books. Since we do not teach our boys and girls to write epics but to read them, the proper place for such information would seem to be a hand-book of literature.

The writer takes this opportunity of thanking many friends to whom he is under obligation for helpful suggestions; especially: Professor William T. Brewster, of Columbia University; Mr. D. O. S. Lowell, of Roxbury Latin School, Boston; Mr. Charles S. Thomas, of Newton High School, Massachusetts; Professor James F. Hosis, of Chicago Normal College; and his colleague, Mr. Eric Parson.

Groton, Mass.,

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The English People and their Language. When our Anglo-Saxon¹ ancestors rowed up the English rivers and took possession of what soon came to be called England, or land of the Angles, they found a considerable civilization, but they were too ignorant to value it. They drove the native inhabitants, of Celtic stock, steadily westward into Wales and Ireland, absorbing little of either their customs or their language. What material the early Britons gave to English literature came at a later date, when English poets wrote about the British Arthur, or Lear, or Cymbeline. The history of Eng-

¹ *Anglo-Saxon.* This name sprang from the fact that the Angles and the Saxons were chief among the "Low German" tribes which invaded Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries. It must not be supposed, however, that they came as one people or spoke one dialect. "Saxons" was the name often used in their own time by foreigners to denote roughly all the commingling tribes, but the land and the language were named after the Angles. In this book "Anglo-Saxon" will be used to denote all the Low German settlers in Britain, and "Old English" to denote their language and literature.

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lish literature begins, therefore, with the invading Anglo-Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons were the chief ancestors of Englishmen in blood, customs, language, and literature. Their rough strength, directness, and sincerity, though modified in countless ways through all the years since the landing of Hengist in 449, have persisted as the backbone of English character; and this character, softened to a necessary flexibility by foreign influence,



STONEHENGE, PREHISTORIC RUINS ON
SALISBURY PLAIN

has developed a great nation and a great literature. It is important, therefore, to know something of the life and writings of these early settlers before we study the literature of their descendants.

The Anglo-Saxons took readily to simple agricultural life, but when they left their German homes they were a primitive people, used to warfare, hunting, and warlike sports. Furthermore, the hardships of long winters made them terrible to the city-dwelling Britons. Great "smilers in battle," strong eaters and drinkers, they were a vigorous folk. They lacked the faery fancy of the Celt and the sunny laughter of the Roman, but they far surpassed those races in earnestness and integrity. The picture given by Tacitus of the early Germans is substantially true of the Anglo-Saxons: they were hospitable, loyal, fearless, held women in respect, and had a

peculiar, highly developed sense of the freeman's rights. These characteristics, coupled with their physical stamina, gave them the strength to absorb countless outside influences and yet remain, at heart, the same. The Danes invaded the east coast from the eighth to the tenth centuries and became English; the Normans came in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and turned English; and to-day English speech and customs are reaching the remotest corners of the world. Unable to develop national government, too inflexible to grow with the changing world, the Anglo-Saxons needed outside influence, such as the Norman conquest, but through all the changes of the English nation, their indestructible vitality perpetuated the main Anglo-Saxon characteristics.

The language of the Anglo-Saxons was like their character — rough, direct, vigorous. When they came to England, and for many centuries afterwards, their speech was very different from modern English — how different may be seen by comparing a line or two of their great epic poem, *Beowulf*, with a literal English translation:

Old English: Hwæt! wê Gar-Dena in gêar-dagum

Translation: Ho! we of the Spear-Danes in yore days

Old English: þeod-cyninga þrym gefrûnon.

Translation: Of the folk-kings the fame have heard.

After a little study, however, it becomes apparent that, roughly speaking, this Old English speech was the father of Chaucer's, Shakespeare's, and Wordsworth's English. The language, nevertheless, was not "fixed" in dictionaries, as it is to-day; it was split into many dialects; it was greatly influenced by contact with French and Latin; and,

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finally, it kept changing through a period (500–1500) nearly three times as long as the period of so-called Modern English. If we take the trouble to follow it through all its shiftings, to note the gradual disappearance of inflections and the inroads from foreign tongues, we realize that for every hundred words we speak, eighty or ninety are of Old English origin. Though a large proportion (about 75 per cent.) of the words in an English dictionary is of foreign origin, many of these words are unusual, such as scientific terms; while the names of common objects, such as *man*, *house*, *tree*, the most common verbs, such as *swim*, *run*, *work*, the pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions,—the main stock of our speech, in short,—come direct from the Old English. But Old English words were too limited, especially in expressing abstractions, for new needs. The Anglo-Saxons, for instance, had no word to represent adequately what we mean by the words *government* and *nation*, so, as the need arose, their descendants took such words from French and Latin. Again, they made no distinction between sheep in the pasture and sheep dressed for the table till they learned from the Norman French to say *mutton*. A few foreign words of all sorts, such as *shawl* from Persia and *tobacco* from America, have come into the language at different times, usually through trade, but the two great additions are French and Latin. French came in first through the Normans, but chiefly in the time of the Plantagenets,¹ when the English Kings held large domains in France and when literature on both sides of the Channel was largely French. Occasional Latin words, espe-

¹ 1154–1399.

cially in connection with the church, have crept into English through the whole period of English history, but the great bulk entered the language either in the time of the Tudors,¹ when all Europe was interested in the classics, or, later, along with Greek, in the nineteenth century, to supply the needs of science and invention. It must be remembered, of course, that foreign words got into literature long before they got into the language of the common people, and that the great body of Englishmen, till they began to read in comparatively recent times, used a far greater proportion of Old English than we should find in the writings of a learned man such as Milton; yet even Milton's works contain less than 30 per cent. of words of foreign origin. Thus we find that a writer, like Bunyan or Wordsworth, using the simple language of the common people, employs words almost wholly of Old English origin.

The foreign additions, then, so persistent was the Anglo-Saxon speech, enriched, rather than destroyed the old language. A familiar way in which we speak of the English language is to compare it to a tree, of which the trunk is Old English, while the branches are many of them grafted on from other tongues; and, to carry the figure further, the wonderful blossoms and fruit of such a tree combine the strength of the parent stem with the variety and rich beauty of the grafted limbs. If our Bible were not written chiefly in Old English words (about 90 per cent.), it would not be so strong and direct as it is, but if it were wholly Old English, it would lack much of its sonorous beauty.

¹ 1485-1603.

OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms embraced a great race, dominant in England for six centuries; and in their literature we find a various life reflected. It is important to realize that their poems are not a succession of mournful dirges, as many have supposed. "They tell tales, drink the mead, race horses across the plain, ply bow and spear, are loyal to their lords, defiant of their foes, hungry for honor; moreover, when they see death approaching, they face it with solemnity — if pagans, with fortitude and calm resignation; if Christians, with godly fear and joyful hope. Not savages these, not mere drunken churls, not cravens continually occupied with images of the charnel-house, but men who challenge our respect, and deserve it."¹ Yet, various and interesting as Old English literature is, it is more serious than the writings of any other nation. "Night is the clutch of the grave," "Loathly is that earth-house and grim to dwell in,"—such melancholy expressions abound. War, seafaring, and death, the chief subjects of the pagan and secular poems, prompt the singers more often to sadness than to mirth; and the Christian poems, written in the same serious tone, are pervaded by a like earnestness. This seriousness, however, is so direct and sincere and the language which expresses it is so vivid, that it often strikes, like Hebrew poetry, into sublimity. To understand the spirit of Old English poetry is to understand in large measure English Puritanism and the

¹ From *Translations of Old English Poetry*, preface, vi, by Cook and Tinker.

“high seriousness” of such poets as Milton and Wordsworth.

OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

In looking back over the literature of the past we must not forget that it was written by individuals, as the books of to-day are written, with no thought of the pigeon-holes into which students would later try to force it. It must be remembered, moreover, that the people of Alfred's time did not think the same kind of thoughts or speak quite the same language as the people of Offa's time. In other words, we must not lose the perspective of a great and various literature extending over six centuries. In the case of the Anglo-Saxons, however, it will be convenient and fairly accurate to divide Old English poetry, roughly speaking, into that which dealt with pagan and secular subjects and that which dealt with religious subjects.

Beowulf. The earliest Old English poetry, as is common among primitive tribes, was oral — war songs and tales of their heroes; for the most part, sung at their feasts by the *scop*, or gleeman. From these stories and songs arose their epic poems, eventually written out by individuals, rewritten by others, and changed till the anonymous form in which they have come down to us is probably of much later date than the original. Of most of these poems we possess only small fragments, but *Beowulf*, the national Old English epic, has been handed down almost entire. It was written probably near the end of the seventh century,¹ but the story was brought

¹ Our oldest manuscript of *Beowulf* is a copy, probably with some changes, written in the tenth century.

TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST PAGE OF "BEOWULF."

SEE FACSIMILE OPPOSITE.

Lo, praise of the prowess of people-kings
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,
we have heard, and what honor the Athelings won!
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
awing the earls. Since erst he lay
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
till before him the folk, both far and near,
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
gave him gifts: a good king he!
To him an heir was afterward born,
a son in his halls, whom heaven sent
to favor the folk, feeling their woe
that erst they had lacked an earl for leader
so long a while; the Lord endowed him,
the Wielder of Wonder, with world's renown.
Famed was this Beowulf: far flew the boast of him,
son of Scyld, in the Scandian lands.
So becomes it a youth to quit him well
with his father's friends, by fee and gift, . . .

Translation by F. B. GUMMERE.

over from the Continent and deals with heroes who lived along the North German and Danish coasts. Beowulf was a historical person, nephew of Chochilaicus (Hygelac in the poem), king of the Geats, but, like Siegfried, Hercules, and Rustum in their respective races, he is vaguely identified in legend with spring and all that is good in triumph over darkness and the powers of evil. To the Anglo-Saxons in their forests and fens the long dark winter was a terrible foe, and it they identified with Grendel, a monster of the fen. Here is the story:

Hrothgar, king of the Danes, has built a great mead-hall, or palace, wherein he and his followers sit down to feast. But Grendel, angry at the sounds of joy in the mead-hall, comes by night over the "mist-covered moor-fens" and carries off thane after thane to the sea-bottom den where he and his mother dwell.

Untrod is their home;

by wolf-cliffs haunt they and windy headlands,
fenways fearful, where flows the stream
from mountains gliding to gloom of the rocks,
underground flood. Not far is it hence
in measure of miles that the mere expands,
and o'er it the frost-bound forest hanging,
sturdily rooted, shadows the wave.
By night is a wonder weird to see,
fire on the waters. So wise lived none
of the sons of men, to search those depths!
Nay, though the heath-rover, harried by dogs,
the horn-proud hart this holt should seek,
long distance driven, his dear life first
on the brink he yields ere he brave the plunge
to hide his head: 't is no happy place!
Thence the welter of waters washes up
wan to welkin when winds bestir

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evil storms, and air grows dusk,
and the heavens weep.¹

For twelve years no one is found who can overcome the monster. Then Beowulf comes over the sea from Geatland² to help Hrothgar. See the young warrior and his comrades march up the street to Hrothgar's hall:

Stone-bright the street: it showed the way
to the crowd of clansmen. Corselets glistened
hand-forged, hard; on their harness bright
the steel ring sang, as they strode along
in mail of battle, and marched to the hall.
There, weary of ocean, the wall along
they set their bucklers, their broad shields, down,
and bowed them to bench: the breastplates clanged,
war-gear of men; their weapons stacked,
spears of the sea-farers stood together,
gray-tipped ash: that iron band
was worthily weaponed!³

The "battle-brave" Beowulf, with "thirty men's heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand," is welcomed by the Danish king, who at bedtime leaves the hall in charge of the hero and his fourteen companions. At length Grendel approaches, more furious than ever. First he kills one of the sleeping companions, then turns towards the leader, who, without weapons, grapples with him in a hand to hand struggle. Before long Beowulf with a mighty wrench tears Grendel's arm from its socket, and the monster, roaring with rage and pain, makes off to his den, where he dies.

But the joy of the Dane-men is short-lived, for the following night Grendel's mother comes to avenge his death. When

¹ Translation by F. B. Gummere.

² Perhaps in Southern Sweden, perhaps in Jutland.

³ Translation by F. B. Gummere.

she has made off with one of Hrothgar's followers, Beowulf is called to the rescue. Armed this time, he follows her over moorland and through dark waters till, after a fierce struggle in her sea-bottom den, he slays her and, cutting off the dead Grendel's head, swims back with it in triumph.

Later, Beowulf becomes king of the Geats. After fifty years of happy rule, he learns that his own country is troubled by a dragon. The old champion goes forth to kill the monster, but, though he succeeds in slaying the dragon, he is himself killed in the struggle. His grief-stricken people burn his body with great ceremony and raise a huge barrow on the shore to his memory.

Thus made their mourning the men of Geatland,
for their hero's passing his hearth-companions:
quoth that of all the kings of earth,
of men he was mildest and most beloved,
to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.¹

But a recital of a mere outline of the story of *Beowulf*, with scattered quotations, gives no picture of the beauty and setting of the poem. It should be read entire if one would appreciate its simplicity and vigor and carry in the memory a true image of the warlike race that gave it birth.

Of the fragments of Old English epics, *The Attack on Finnsburg*, of which about fifty lines remain, gives a vivid picture of battle: "The sword-light gleamed as if Finn's whole burg were blazing with fire." *Finnsburg* is clearly closer than *Beowulf* to the original minstrel form: it moves breathlessly, as if the author were composing on his feet, while the author of *Beowulf* obviously had time to reflect and adorn. Another of the minstrel-

¹ Translation by F. B. Gummere.

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tales is *Widsith*, or the "Far-Wanderer," in which the *scop* tells of the people and kings he has met in his travels. It bears the distinction of being the earliest piece of Old English writing that we have. Stirring narrative poems, not of this early epic group, but telling of the contest with the Danes in the tenth century, are *The Battle of Brunanburgh*¹ and *The Battle of Maldon*, both inserted in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.²

Other verses that belong in the division of secular poems are *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Ruined City*, and *Deor's Lament*. These pieces are not narratives; they express rather the thoughts and feelings of their authors. In *The Wanderer* the subject is the cruelty of Wyrd, goddess of Fate; in *The Seafarer* it is the call of the sea and the necessity of keeping on in adversity; in *The Ruined City* it is a picture of a deserted British town, with its broken baths; in *Deor's Lament* it is the hard luck and somewhat wistful courage of the writer, an outcast minstrel. Deor reminds himself of others brave in adversity and concludes each stanza with the consolation:

That he surmounted; so this may I.

It is more of a personal, lyric poem than the others, the only poem in Old English, in fact, with a regular refrain. *The Seafarer* gives in Part I a vivid picture of life on a winter sea:

I have suffered; have borne tribulations; explored in my ship
Mid the terrible rolling of waves, habitations of sorrow.

.
¹ Translated by Tennyson, in a vigorous but not literal version.

² See p. 25.

The hail flew in showers about me; and there I heard only
The roar of the sea, ice-cold waves, and the song of the swan;
For pastime the gannets' cry served me; the kittiwakes' chatter
For laughter of men; and for mead drink the call of the sea-
mews.¹

Yet, in spite of the hardships, something still calls the
seafarer to the sea:

Now my spirit uneasily turns in its chamber,
Now wanders forth over the tide, o'er the home of the whale,
To the ends of the earth — and comes back to me. Eager and
greedy
The lone wanderer screams, and resistlessly drives my soul on-
ward,
Over the whale path, over the tracts of the sea.²

It is the same eager, exploring spirit that through all
time

Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.

And the tenacity and courage which the author of *The Seafarer* urges in Part II we find echoing down through
English poetry to the present day, echoing in such
familiar lines as Arnold's

On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God!

and Browning's

Cry "speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

¹ Translation by LaMotte Iddings, in *Translations from Old English Poetry*, Cook and Tinker.

² Translation by LaMotte Iddings, in *Translations from Old English Poetry*, Cook and Tinker.

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Even a brief account of Old English poetry may not omit mention of the *Riddles*, *Gnomic Verses*, or proverbs, and *Charms*. The *Charms*, some of them very old, are quaint relics of superstition. Here is a charm for swarming bees:

Take earth, throw it up with thy right hand from under thy right foot, and say:

I take earth under foot, I have found it.
Verily earth avails against every creature,
And against mischief and mindlessness,
And against the great tongue of man.
Throw dust over them when they swarm, and say:
Sit ye, victor dames, sink to earth,
Never to fly wild to the wood!
Be as mindful of my good
As every man is of food and estate.¹

Religious Poetry. Old English religious poetry is almost as old as the secular poetry and exceeds it in bulk. CÆDMON, the first of the religious poets, is the earliest Old English writer whose name we know. About 660, or less than a century after the introduction of Christianity into England, he began to make his religious poems and paraphrases of the Bible, and for a century after him religious poetry flourished in Northumbria. Cædmon was a poor cowherd in the monastery of Hild at Whitby, and, knowing nothing of making verses, he was long accustomed to leave the table at feasts when all sang in turn. One night, however, Bæda tells, an angel appeared to him in a vision and commanded him

¹ Translation by W. O. Stevens, in *Translations from Old English Poetry*, Cook and Tinker.

to sing. He protested that he could not sing, but the angel replied, "No matter, you are to sing"; and, when Cædmon asked what he should sing, the angel told him to "sing the beginning of created things." To his surprise the cowherd found, on awaking, that he could sing and make verses, whereupon for the rest of his life he



WHITBY ABBEY

made religious poems and was held in great honor at Whitby. It is not certain what poems were really the work of Cædmon, but paraphrases of parts of the Bible were long ascribed to him, though scholars now incline to believe that the poems belong to a later date. More authentic are the few verses called *Cædmon's Hymn*.

The other great name among Old English religious poets is CYNEWULF.¹ He lived, probably also in Northumbria, about a century after Cædmon. Cynewulf tells

¹ Pronounced *Kin-e-wulf*.

how, when he was young, he was "guilty of misdeeds, fettered by sins, tormented with anxieties, bound with bitternesses," and how, when he was old, God granted him grace: "He set my body free, unlocked my heart, and released the power of song, which I have since joyfully made use of in the world."¹ A great many poems have been attributed to Cynewulf. Four of these, *Elene*, the *Christ*, *Juliana*, and the *Fates of the Apostles*, are certainly his, containing as they do rune-passages, or letters interwoven in the text, with his name. *The Wanderer* and many of the *Riddles* have been ascribed to him, as well as nearly all the long religious poems in Old English. Of these *The Dream of the Rood* and *Judith* are among the most prominent. *Elene*, his best authentic work, tells how Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine, went in search of the true cross and how, when she found three crosses, a miracle revealed to her the one on which the Saviour was crucified. *The Dream of the Rood*, which bears a striking resemblance to *Elene*, is certainly worthy of Cynewulf. It tells how in a dream the author saw the cross, which after a long time spoke to him and told in noble language the story of the crucifixion.

"On me a while suffered the Son of God," says the cross;

Therefore now full of majesty I tower
High under heaven; and I have power to heal
All those who do me reverence.

Of old

Was I a punishment, the cruelest,
The most abhorred by men, ere I for man

¹ From Cynewulf's *Elene*.

Had opened the true way of life. So, then
The Prince of Glory, Guardian of heaven,
Above all other trees exalted me.¹

Moved by the vision to prayer, the poet is consoled and restored to hope.

Of the other poems in this division, *Judith*, which tells of the terrible death of Holofernes, is at once the most striking and the most characteristically Anglo-Saxon. Hear the Old English delight in the battle; it is a Hebrew story and "the battle is the Lord's," but the zest for red war is true Anglo-Saxon:

They who yet lived fled from the foemen's arms,
The band of Hebrews followed on their track,
Honored with victory, enriched with fame.
The Lord God, the Almighty, graciously
Gave them His help. They labored piously,
The famous heroes, with bright swords to cut
A war-path through the press of evil ones.²

Old English Verse-form. Practically all Old English poetry is in a peculiar, swinging measure. Each line has two parts, with two strong stresses (or accents) in each part, and with no fixed number of unaccented syllables. The stressed syllables, far more strongly accented than in modern poetry, have beginning-rime (or alliteration),³ and there is no end-rime. There is, as

¹ Translation by LaMotte Iddings, in *Translations from Old English Poetry*, Cook and Tinker.

² Translation by Henry Morley, in Morley's *English Writers*.

³ The third accent, or the first in the second half of the line, is called the "rime-giver"; it and either or both of the accents in the first half begin with a vowel or the same consonant. The fourth

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Dr. Gummere puts it, "a sort of irregular but powerful leap to the rhythm. It is all weight, force,—no stately, even, measured pace, as in Greek epic verse. Our old meter inclines, like our ancestors themselves, to violence. It is at its best in describing the din of war, the uncertain swaying of warriors in battle;—a verse cadenced by the crashing blows of sword and ax."¹ Different as it is from modern poetry, we shall see that in its force, rather than length, of the accented syllable and in its disregard for the number of syllables in a line it is one of the chief ancestors of modern English verse.²

OLD ENGLISH PROSE.

During the ninth century Northumbria was devastated by the Danes, and what Old English literature flourished after that was in the South of England, at Winchester, in the Kingdom of Wessex. Here Old English prose first came into prominence, and KING ALFRED is conspicuously the chief figure. Latin had been the language of prose before Alfred, as in Bæda's *Ecclesiastical History* (about 710). It is true that just before his death Bæda wrote an English *Translation of the Gospel of St. John*, but it

accent never has the same initial sound as the rime-giver, but it may "alliterate" with one of the accents in the first half of the line, if this accent does not rime with the rime-giver. An example of an Old English line is:

Weox under wolcnum, weord-myndum þah

For he *waxed* under *welkin*, in *wealth* he *throve*.

For other examples, in translation, see the passages from *Beowulf* on pp. 10–15.

¹ *Handbook of Poetics*, p. 176.

² For a discussion of English versification see p. 421.



KING ALFRED
Statue at Winchester by Hamo Thornycroft

was not till the West-Saxon king championed his native tongue that prose-writing in English was at all common. For Alfred not only wrote, but set up schools where "all the free-born youth, who have the means, shall be set to learning . . . till they can read English writing thoroughly."

Born about 849, Alfred showed in his youth a fondness for literature and a keen desire for learning. Before he was thirty he became king of the West Saxons and was occupied for the greater part of his reign with Danish wars. In spite of this, however, and although his health was weak, he managed to unite the Saxon people, to make wise laws, to promote learning, and to live a model life. Tradition has it that eight hours of each twenty-four he spent in attending to the affairs of his kingdom, eight in sleeping, eating, and recreation, and the third eight he reserved for study. Comely, brave, and wise, he has reasonably been held by the English people of all time as the pattern of a good ruler.

Alfred's literary work was mostly translation, edited usually with important additions of his own for the instruction of his Wessex people. As in the case of the poets, the authorship of the so-called works of Alfred is not undisputed, but it is almost certain that the following were translated either by him or under his direction: Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, The *History* of Orosius, Bæda's *History*, The *Consolations* of Boethius, Gregory's *Dialogues*, and the *Psalms*. Perhaps his most important work was on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. A brief record before his time, he enlarged it and made it interesting; and with the impulse he gave it, it was continued till 1154.

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It is not only the chief source of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon history, but is a great piece of literature.

Soon after Alfred Old English literature came to a standstill. It was yet written, of course, chiefly in the schools and monasteries,—notably by Ælfric, best known for his *Homilies*; a few poems such as the *Battle of Brunanburgh* and the *Battle of Maldon* were made; and the *Chronicle* was kept up. But the whole northeast half of England was being settled by Danes, soon actually to rule on Alfred's throne, and not long after the Danes came the Normans. The Anglo-Saxons, in other words, instead of feeling a common impulse, were going to pieces. They lacked a national sense.

The body of Old English literature is very large, considering its antiquity. In its love of the great out-of-doors and the heroic deeds of men, in its seriousness, and in its religious zeal it gives a vivid picture of a vigorous race. In the literature that followed we shall find little that is pure Anglo-Saxon, but we shall often find the strong Anglo-Saxon spirit underneath. Yet with its tribal limitations it could not proceed beyond the point to which Cynewulf raised it in poetry and Alfred in prose. Before England could have a national language and a national literature, the centralizing and organizing genius of the Danes and Normans had to do its work.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
450-600	Anglo-Saxon Invasion of Britain Beowulf, lives on Continent about 520 Introduction of Christianity, in Kent, 597		Charms Widsith	
600-700	Supremacy of Northumbria Synod of Whitby, 664	Cædmon, about 675	Hymns Beowulf, about 700	
700-800	Supremacy of Mercia Danish Invasions begin in 781	Bæda, 673-735 Cynewulf, about 750	Elene, etc.	History (Latin)
800-900	Supremacy of Wessex ALFRED, King of Wessex, 871-901 Wars with Danes	Alfred, 849-901	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, continued to 1154	Translations
900-1013	Supremacy of Wessex First Danegeld, 991	Ælfric, about 900	The Battle of Maldon, 991	Homilies
1013-1042 1042-1066 1066-1071	DANISH KINGS EDWARD THE CONFESSOR Norman Conquest			

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
READING.

LITERATURE. BEOWULF. Of the numerous translations, perhaps the most useful, because it follows exactly the verse-form of the original, is that by Gummere in *The Oldest English Epic* (Macmillan). Of the other Old English poems the best are given in *Translations from Old English Poetry*, ed. by Cook and Tinker (Ginn). Of these THE SEAFARER, DEOR'S LAMENT, ELENE, THE DREAM OF THE ROOD, JUDITH, THE BATTLE OF MALDON, and a few riddles and charms form a representative selection for a first reading.

Sufficient specimens of Old English prose will be found in Cook and Tinker's *Translations from Old English Prose* (Ginn). Bæda's HISTORY and THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE are published, translated, in one volume in the Bohn Library; separately in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton).

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. Grant Allen's *Anglo-Saxon Britain* (S. P. C. K.) is a good brief account of the period. For the literary history, see special chapters in books recommended on p. 433; also Stopford Brooke's *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (Macmillan).

FICTION. Bulwer Lytton's *Harold* and Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* give interesting, if not wholly historical, pictures of the Norman Conquest. Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* gives here and there touches of the quaint superstitions of the Anglo-Saxons.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE CONQUEST TO CHAUCER

(1066-1375)

I. THE FOREIGN PERIOD, 1066-1250.

The Conquest. Chaucer, who died in the year 1400, stands midway in point of time between Alfred and the present day. Yet a moment's glance at the language of Chaucer's writings shows us that they are much farther from old than from modern English. This great change, from Anglo-Saxon England, with its tribes and dialects, to a national England, with a national language, was brought about largely by the Norman Conquest. The expression, "the chasm of the Conquest," does not exaggerate the gulf which separates the language and the literature of the West Saxons from the language and the literature of Englishmen in the reign of Henry III. During this foreign period there were some books written in English,—a kind of dying Old English,—a few of which we shall notice, but most of the writing in England was in Latin and French. The time was one of transition. The important thing to remark, therefore, is the character of the changing England and the changing language.

The Conquest by the Normans was so complete, politically, that positions in both church and state were soon

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filled by Normans. Norman French, therefore, became the language not only of the nobility, but of the law-courts, of the monasteries, and of the schools. What few wealthy Saxons were able to retain their lands and positions usually imitated their Norman overlords; and Englishmen who rose from the ranks did so by the grace of a French schooling. English, therefore, though still *spoken* by the majority of the inhabitants of England, nearly ceased for a century and a half as a *literary* language. It is well to remember that the early Plantagenet kings held more acres south of the Channel than north, and that Richard Cœur de Leon, a hero in English story, spoke French, had French ways, and, even when king of England, spent the greater part of his time out of England.

This period of transition, though its direct returns in English books were few, saw the production of some brilliant literature in French and Latin; and much of this literature affected the English of later times. Outside of England, too, learning and literature flourished, and though we have no space here to consider this foreign literature in detail, it is important to remember that Englishmen of education were far more likely to be familiar with the writings of Chrestien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach than with the works of Cynewulf and Alfred, or even of their contemporary English authors, Orm and Layamon. Whether written in England or on the Continent, this foreign literature — especially that part which may be grouped under *Romances* — exerted, as we shall presently see, a tremendous influence on the English literature of the thirteenth century.

The Language. The reason that the Romances, even those of which the stories came from England, did not receive English form till after they had been written in French, is due not only to the fact that French was the language of the educated, but to the further fact that for a long time there was no common English language, intelligible, say, in both York and London. We have seen the disappearance of the Northumbrian dialect, as a literary language, during the Danish invasions, and the prominence, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, of the West-Saxon dialect. Soon after the Conquest the speech of Alfred began to disappear into Dorset and Cornwall. Midland (or Mercian) Old English, moreover, was sunk, at the time of the Conquest, into local, oral obscurity. The result was that literally for over a century, and practically for three centuries (1066-1362), Englishmen of different parts of the country could not understand each other, or even read, without difficulty, each other's writings. But English was only submerged, not obliterated; gradually it became, with the Mercian dialect the chief element, spoken as a national language,¹ except in the extreme North and West; and a little later Chaucer fixed it for all time as the language of England's literature.

How near the Mercian dialect, even as early as 1140, was to modern English may be appreciated by comparing an easy sentence from the *Chronicle* of that date with a literal translation.

¹ In 1362 English was substituted for French as the language of the law-courts.

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CHRONICLE.

An te eorl of Angæu
wærd ded, and his sune
Henri toc to þe rice.

TRANSLATION.

And the earl of Anjou
was dead, and his son
Henry took to the kingdom.

The disappearance of Old English as a literary language is marked chiefly by three things. (1) *A great change in vocabulary.* Practically all words not in common oral use were lost, and their equivalents, when English began to be written considerably again (i.e., in the thirteenth century), were found in French. (2) *A further influence of French was to hasten the disappearance of inflections and the consequent use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs.* (3) The Old English alliterative meter, though it was revived in the fourteenth century, gave way largely to the *numbered syllables and end-rime of French verse.* The resulting English, the language of Chaucer, retained many marks, in both inflection and idiom, of its Old English origin; neither Old English nor modern English, it has been roughly called *Middle English.* In its early stages, in the thirteenth century, it was still broken into many dialects, but a national England, wrought by the centralizing genius of Norman and Plantagenet, surely, if slowly, developed a national language.

English Literature, 1066–1250. For over a century after the Conquest, writings in English were practically a living-on of Old English. We have noted the *Chronicle*, continuing till 1154. Two other important works should be mentioned: Layamon's *Brut* (1205) and Orm's *Ormulum* (about 1200). Layamon, a priest living at Ernley, on the banks of the Severn, says he took

Bæda's *History*, both in Latin and the Old English translation, and Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*, compressed the three into one, and so wrote out the story of Britain. He begins with the fiction that ascribed the founding of Britain to Brutus, descendant of Æneas,¹ and includes in his poem, along with a certain amount of history, the larger part of the Arthurian legend. Layamon's *Brut* is written in the Old English alliterative style. Here is an example:

Layamon. fetheren he nom mid fingren
& fiede on boc-felle.

Translation. feather (pen) he took with fingers
and wrote on book-fell (skin).

But, early as the *Brut* was written, it is not without signs of the foreign influence: Layamon uses the old meter awkwardly, as if it were not quite natural; he introduces some end-rime; and he shows the growing interest in the Arthurian legend. The *Ormulum*, or "book of Orm," is a metrical paraphrase of the gospels for the year, with copious comments by the author. In one sense it seems more modern than Layamon's *Brut*, probably because it is almost pure Mercian English, and because it is written in fifteen-syllable couplets, with a good deal of end-rime as well as alliteration. But it bears no sign of the foreign influence in its subject and in its vocabulary; Orm uses scarcely half-a-dozen French words. The chief value of the poem is for students of the changing language, for the *Ormulum* carries no interest as poetry.

¹ Milton uses the same story for the genealogy of Sabrina, in *Comus*, l. 826.

2. MIDDLE ENGLISH BEFORE CHAUCER, 1250-1375.

A book interesting because it stands half way between the Old English of Layamon and the Middle English of the Romances, is the *Ancren Riwele*, or "Rules for Anchoresses" (c. 1225), written for three ladies who wished to live in religious retirement. It is one of the earliest examples of English prose (excepting, of course, the Anglo-Saxon writers) and, though written at a time when the English language was still in confusion, it stands out as one of the best pieces of prose writing in the Middle Ages.

Of about the same date and reminding us that the poets of the thirteenth century were not without true feeling, are several short poems, such as *The Owl and the Nightingale*. One of these, especially, is still fresh with the sights and sounds of spring. It begins:

Sumer is icumen in,
 Lhude¹ sing cuccu!
 Groweth sed,² and bloweth med,³
 And springth the wude⁴ nu,⁵
 Sing cuccu.

These songs show little of the foreign book-learning; they spring naturally from native impulse and prevent us from forgetting that Englishmen at all times take easily to songs of nature. If these songs did not remind us of the Englishman's love of out-of-doors, the ballads, still more truly native, quite the production of the people as opposed to the courtly scholars, would keep fresh our

¹ Loud.² seed.³ meadow.⁴ wood.⁵ anew.

picture of merry England. Some of these ballads, springing from oral tradition, are very old, but a study of them, as well as of the early plays, also made for the people, must be reserved for later chapters, when their connection with written literature will be clear.¹ For the present it is sufficient to realize that the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a great many English works, some humble and popular, some addressed to courtly ears.

For, in addition to the popular writings just mentioned, the chronicling and moralizing spirit of the Middle Ages continued to produce works in English as well as in Latin. Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* (1298), the *Metrical Lives of the Saints* (1300), possibly by the same author, *Cursor Mundi* (c. 1320), an old-fashioned paraphrase of the Scriptures, and Michael of Northgate's *Ayenbite of Inwyt*² (1340) are well-known examples. In more fictitious vein is the *Voyages and Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a quaint collection of stories and information based on a supposed journey to the Holy Land and beyond. The book was first written in French (c. 1370), and translated into English in the early fifteenth century. Like the narrative of Marco Polo, it is too inaccurate and fabulous to have been of service to the perplexed traveler, but it is lively reading and gives us much of our lore about such wondrous monarchs as Prester John. Here is an example, in modern spelling:

"And from thence, men go through little Ermonyne.³ And in that country is an old castle, that stands upon a

¹ The Ballads in Chap. III, the Plays in Chap. V.

² That is, "Remorse of Conscience."

³ Armenia.

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rock, the which is cleped ¹ The Castle of the Sparrowhawk; . . . where men find a sparrowhawk upon a perch right fair, and right well made; and a fair Lady of Fayrye,² that keepeth it. And who that will wake ³ that sparrow-hawk, 7 days and 7 nights, and as some men say, 3 days and 3 nights, without company and without sleep, that fair lady shall give him, when he hath done, the first wish, that he will wish, of earthly things: and that hath been proved often times."

The Romances. The great literature of this period, however,—great in bulk as well as in excellence—was the body of poems which are usually called *Romances*.⁴ The Romances began to flourish, as we have seen, in the fertile soil of France, during the twelfth century. Written rather for "my lady's bower" than for "my lord's hall," they supplanted the more stately epic throughout Europe in the thirteenth century. It is difficult, however, even in a long explanation, and impossible in a short, to draw an exact line around what may be strictly called "Metrical Romances," as distinguished from epic on the one hand and popular tales on the other. The old writers themselves felt no close restriction in their choice of subjects; the story of Arthur and his knights, most popular of the Romances, was originally the British epic, and the

¹ called.

² Faery.

³ watch, keep vigil.

⁴ *Romances*. A loose term applied to "any fictitious story of heroic, marvelous, or supernatural incidents derived from history or legend." The name was originally applied to a tale written in one of the Romance dialects (i.e., of Roman origin), such as early French or Provençal.

Lay of Havelok comes close to being a popular tale. Roughly, we may include all the heroic, half-fictitious, legendary poetry of the Middle Ages under this term "Romances"; the English poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had, as rich material, all the tales of great and marvelous deeds and all the magic love



GLASTONBURY ABBEY

According to one tradition, the burial-place of King Arthur

stories that had been sung for a century by the trouvères, jongleurs, troubadours, and minnesingers of Europe. The spirit of these Romances we can understand better by reading two lines by Keats;

Magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,—

than by a long explanation; for Romance is of the imagination and will not brook narrow bounds of definition.

The vast number of subjects for these Romances came from all over the world. Ever since Jean Bodel wrote in the twelfth century of the three "matters"—of

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France, of Britain, and of Rome — it has been customary to denote the origin of the stories of Romance by this three-fold division. The stories of Charlemagne and of French heroes are the “matter of France”; the legends of Arthur and his knights, as well as proper English stories, like *King Horn* and *Guy of Warwick*, are the “matter of Britain”; and tales of antiquity, especially those about *Alexander* and about *Troy*, are the “matter of Rome.” When these stories were “Englished,” usually after they had been told in many versions in French, their authors naturally used French sources, as Layamon had used Wace’s *Brut d’Angleterre*; and the result was that not only the foreign versions, even of native English stories, were followed, but the French verse-form, with its numbered syllables and end-rime, was adopted.

In England the Romances were neither so common nor so well written as in France. England, it has been said, “did not possess the heart of the mystery,” but this is not true if we include the Englishmen who wrote in French. It is not true, either, if we consider the vast influence exercised by the Romances on English poets of later times, if we remember that Chaucer used many of them for his plots, and that the “Romantic movement,” towards the close of the eighteenth century, reached its greatest splendor in England. Further, if we count the “matter” as well as the manner, England did very much possess the heart of the mystery, for the Arthurian tales, of the “matter of Britain,” were the chief glory of the whole matter of Romance. And though Malory, the best-known writer of English Arthurian stories, did not

live till the fifteenth century, there were a good many English poems on this subject written during the true period of Romance — the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Finally, a Briton was first responsible for the popularity of the Arthurian legends. GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, a



TINTAGEL HEAD, CORNWALL

Welshman, wrote his *Historia Regum Britanniae* in Latin about 1140, and in this book he included all he could find and about all he could invent, not only about Brutus and the fictitious settlement of Britain, but about Arthur and his knights. Wace, the Frenchman, and Layamon, the Englishman who followed him, we have seen retelling the story, pretty much as Geoffrey left it. The tales, however, were popular in France for a century before they were written in English. *Sir Tristrem* and *Arthur*

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and Merlin (both written in the late thirteenth century), *Morte Arthure* (c. 1340), and *Gawain and the Green Knight* (c. 1370) were the chief English poems based on these old British legends. Other Romances popular in England were *King Horn* (c. 1250), *Havelok* (c. 1300), *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1300), and *Bevis of Hampton* (c. 1300). Among all these and many more, unmentioned here,¹ *Gawain and the Green Knight* stands out as conspicuously the best.

While Arthur and his knights are feasting at Camelot, one New Year's Day, a giant clad in green rides into the hall and challenges any of the knights to exchange blows with him. His opponent may have the first stroke, on condition that a year later the green knight be allowed his turn. At first all the knights are afraid, but Gawain, who finally takes up the challenge, strikes off the head of the strange giant. Thereupon the green knight rides away, carrying his head in his hand.

A year later Gawain, though his companions seek to dissuade him, insists on going to the Green Chapel to receive his blow. After wandering for a long time without finding the Green Chapel, he comes to a beautiful castle, the lord of which tells him that it is but two miles to the Green Chapel and, since it is only Christmas eve, persuades him to spend the week with him. At a Christmas feast the host suggests that each day Gawain shall stay in the castle with his wife, while he himself shall go early to the chase; and they agree to exchange each evening whatever they have received during the day. When the host has gone, his beautiful wife seeks to win Gawain's love, but the knight resists her blandishments, accepting only a kiss. This he gives faithfully to his host, in return for the spoils of the chase. So it continues for three

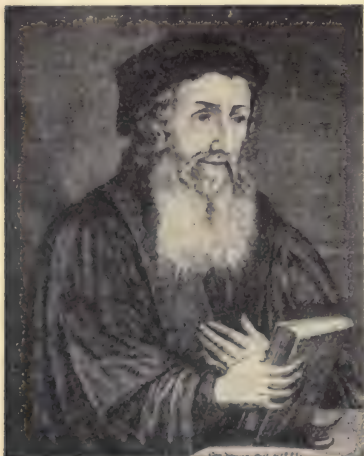
¹ A full list of both the English and French Romances will be found in Appendix I to Schofield's *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*.

days, Gawain rendering the kisses faithfully to his host; he has refused all else except a magic girdle, which will protect him from injury. Of the girdle, however, he does not tell his host.

On New Year's Day Gawain goes to the Green Chapel, a dismal place where "the devil might say his matins at midnight." The giant comes forth, praises him for keeping the agreement, and strikes him, but in such a way that he is not seriously injured. Then the giant reveals to Gawain that he and the host of the castle are one and the same and that he has been the cause of his wife's love-making, to test Gawain's virtue. Thereupon he praises the knight for his valour and chastity: "As a pearl among white peas is of more worth than they, so is Gawain, i' faith, by other knights." Gawain is now ashamed of his deceit and tells the other of the magic girdle, but the Green Knight makes light of it and begs the young hero to return with him to his castle. Gawain, however, declines and returns at once to Camelot, where the lords and ladies agree to wear green lace in honor of the adventure.

Gawain and the Green Knight is written in irregular stanzas, combining the revived alliteration with the new end-rimes. Another poem of the same time, *The Pearl*, is so like it, in language, versification, and general excellence that scholars usually attribute both works to the same author. *The Pearl*, however, is not a romance, but a lament, full of genuine feeling, on the death of the poet's daughter. Probably by the same hand are *Cleaness* and *Patience*, retold tales from the Bible. Religious and moral writings, both in Latin and English, were common in the Middle Ages, especially in this fourteenth century. It was the age of Tauler and Huss, the German and Bohemian reformers, and of the English Wiclif, called "the Morning Star of the Reformation."

Wiclif. John Wiclif, next to Chaucer the great figure of the Middle Ages in English Literature, was born about 1320 in Yorkshire and died at Lutterworth, his parish in Leicestershire, in 1384. After a youth spent in scholarly pursuits, he became a great leader of men, especially of the poor. He denied the doctrine of transubstantiation,



JOHN WICLIF

believed in the compulsory poverty of the clergy, and railed at the existing monastic orders, now grown corrupt. About him gathered a great body of followers, called "Lollards"; in fact, it was said that every second man one met in London was a Lollard. Wiclif and many of his followers went about expounding the Gospels to the poor. Through-

out his reforms he excited the bitter animosity of the Church, which in 1382 condemned him as a heretic and which, after his burial, exhumed and burnt his body and scattered the ashes in the River Swift. The Church in the fourteenth century was full of corrupt practices, as Chaucer so vividly points out in his pictures of worldly priests; and such sturdy opposition as Wiclif gave led to the Statute of Heretics, in 1407, a provision for burning "false prophets" at the stake. But the free-

dom which Wiclif upheld could not be put down by statute; a century and a half after his death the cause for which he had labored triumphed.

Wiclif's importance in literature springs from his *Translation of the Bible*, about 1380. Alfred had given the West Saxons part of the Bible in their own tongue, but since his day the Church, increasing in power, had opposed giving the common people the Scriptures to read for themselves. Wiclif's Middle English Bible was much copied in his day, but, coming before the printing press, it did not receive sufficient circulation to overcome the opposition of the Church. His service was to the Lollards of his own time; it remained for Tyndale, in the reign of Henry VIII, to give us our Bible.

Piers Plowman. The greatest literature of the fourteenth century religious revival was undoubtedly *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*. The poem was long ascribed to William Langland, but was probably the work of several men and has come down to us in three texts. It tells how the author, whoever he was, fell a-dreaming on Malvern Hills, as he slept by a brookside, and how in his vision he saw a castle upon a hill and a dungeon below, and in the space between a great crowd of people, chiefly occupied with wickedness — a sort of Vanity Fair. "Holy Church," descending, tells him that the castle is Truth and the dungeon the dwelling of Falsehood. The poet then mingles with the throng — allegorical abstractions, such as Conscience, Reason, the Seven Deadly Sins. The scene changes to Westminster, where the case of "Meed" (or self-interest) whom Conscience refused to marry, is tried; but before a conclusion is reached, the

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author is found listening to the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins. Finally the plowman himself appears, the poor man exalted and transfigured, like Christ. The



MALVERN HILLS, "PIERS PLOWMAN" COUNTRY

poem, expressed in simple, vivid language, was very popular in its day. The opening lines give an excellent idea of its language and its form:

In the somer sesun, whon softe was the sonne,
I schop¹ me into a shroud,² as I a scheep³ were;
In habite as an hermite, unholy of werkes,
Wente I wyde in this world wondres to here;⁴

I was wery, forwandred,⁵ and wente me to reste
Under a brod banke bi a bourne⁶ side;
And as I lay and leonede⁷ and lokede on the watres,
I slumbrede in a slepynge, hit⁸ swyed⁹ so murie.¹⁰

¹ arrayed.

² garment.

³ shepherd.

⁴ hear.

⁵ worn out with wandering.

⁶ brook.

⁷ leaned.

⁸ it.

⁹ sounded.

¹⁰ merry.

The Vision of Piers the Plowman points backward in its Old English meter, but in its subject and in its interest it looks forward to the Puritan England which produced that other great book of the people, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, also written "in the similitude of a dream."

CONCLUSION.

A glance over this period between the Conquest and Chaucer shows a time of transition. During these three centuries the English people and their language were not separate, national units, but were more or less confused — more at first, less toward the end — with the peoples and the languages of the Continent.

We have noted the impress of the Norman character, with its effect on both literature and language. We have marked, too, the living-on, in the real heart of English life, of the native characteristics — the earnestness, the religious zeal, the love of song and out-of-doors. And we have seen how the Romances invaded England and flourished there, till the Middle Ages have taken on in popular tradition something of their bewildering magic, the mystery of their "forests and enchantments drear." But in history we must guard against the fictitious; we must leave the magic with the tales of "faery" and realize soberly that the Middle Ages were filled with real people, whose life was reflected through three centuries in a various literature. Furthermore, because it was an age of transition, because there was no strong national impulse till the reign of Edward III, it is impossible, as it is unwise, to cover the whole period by a comprehensive phrase.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE	
DATES		AUTHOR	<div>REPRESENTATIVE POETRY</div> <div>REPRESENTATIVE PROSE</div>
1066-1135	NORMAN KINGS		Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, to 1154
1135-1154	STEPHEN	Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1140	Historia Regum Britannicæ (Latin)
1154-1189	HENRY II		
1164	Constitutions of Clarendon		
1189-1199	RICHARD I	Orm, about 1200 Layamon, 1205	<div>Ormulum Brut</div> <div>Owl and Nightingale</div> <div>Lytic Poems</div> <div>King Horn, about 1250</div>
1199-1216	JOHN		
1215	Signing of Magna Carta		
1216-1272	HENRY III		
1258	Provisions of Oxford	Robert of Gloucester, 1298	<div>Ancren Riwele, about 1225</div> <div>Chronicle</div> <div>Sir Tristrem, about 1275</div> <div>Arthur and Merlin, about 1275</div>
1272-1307	EDWARD I		
1295	Model Parliament		
1307-1327	EDWARD II		
1314	Battle of Bannockburn		

CHRONOLOGY — (Continued)

From the Conquest to Chaucer

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HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1327-1377	EDWARD III		Havelok, about 1300 Guy of Warwick, about 1300 Bevis of Hampton, about 1300	
1332	Division of Parliament into two Houses			
1346	Battle of Crécy	Dan Michel, about 1340	Morte Arthure, about 1340 Gawain and the Green Knight, about 1370 The Pearl, about 1370	Ayenbite of Inwit
1362	English becomes language of law-courts			Mandeville's Voyages, about 1370
1377-1399	RICHARD II	John Wiclif, 1324-1384 William Langland, ?1330-?1400	Piers the Plowman Miracle Plays (see Chap. V.)	Translation of Bible
1381	Peasants' Revolt			

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

LITERATURE. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HISTORY*, translated, is published in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton); Layamon's *BRUT* has been published, with a translation by Frederic Madden, London, 1847. For a general idea of the Metrical Romances the best collection is by Ellis, *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, 3 vols. (Bohn). *KING HORN* and *HAVELOK* are published by the Clarendon Press. There is a good prose translation of *SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT*, by J. L. Weston (Nutt); and *THE PEARL* has been translated into modern verse by S. Weir Mitchell (Century). *THE VOYAGES AND TRAVELS OF SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE* has been edited by Morley (Cassell's National Library). Selections from *WICLIF'S BIBLE* are published by the Clarendon Press. The best edition of *PIERS THE PLOWMAN* is that by W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press); the poem has been translated into prose by K. M. Warner (Macmillan).

SUGGESTED READINGS.

An excellent beginning may be made by reading the selections given in Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn) and *English Prose* (Ginn) and by reading the translation of *SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT*.

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. Freeman's *Short History of the Norman Conquest* (Clarendon Press) and Stubbs, *The Early Plantagenets* (Epochs Series), cover the political history of the period. One should read also Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century* (Putnam) and Trevelyan's *The Age of Wiclif* (Longmans). The best account of the literary history is Schofield's *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (Macmillan). See also special chapters in books recommended on p. 433.

POETRY, FICTION, ETC. Many novels and plays take their stories and scenes from this period. Among the best are:

Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *Talisman*, Shakespeare's *King John*, Tennyson's *Becket*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, and Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*. *The Red King*, by Kingsley, and *The White Ship*, by Rossetti, are included in *English History told by English Poets*, ed. by Miss Bates and Miss Coman (Macmillan). Gray's poem, *The Bard*, should also be read. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, though they deal with an older story, take their inspiration from this period of Romances.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

(1375-1500)

Romances, as we have seen, flourished in England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Age of Chaucer, coming at the end of this period, was not so much a new era as the climax of the Middle Age in England. New forces were at work — especially in Italy — which were to bring about a new age; and these forces can be seen in England, in the work of Wiclif, even in the poetry of Chaucer. The main character of the time, however, particularly of Chaucer, the chief literary figure of the age, was practically that of the preceding period. With the fourteenth century we recall Crécy, Poitiers, and the Black Prince; the fine heroism of Percy and Douglas at Chevy Chase; — the days “when knighthood was in flower,” when chivalry meant

“Trouthe and honoür, fredom and courteisye.”

It was in this age that Chaucer lived. Like his fellow-poets, he was chiefly a teller of stories; and, like the others, he drew freely on the well-known tales of his time.

We are accustomed, however, to call Chaucer the “Father of English poetry.” But this name should not

indicate that he was particularly an innovator, so much as that he was the greatest writer of his day and the poet who tended to fix the English language and verse-form in channels which they have ever since followed. Perhaps his greatest influence was in showing men that English, in a bi-lingual age, was "sufficient" for poetry. In the century after his death he was looked up to as "the first fyndere of our faire language," and English poets of more modern times have paid great honor to his name.

The literature of the fourteenth century, however, was not written entirely for educated readers. It was at this time that the popular ballads flourished, the most famous of which were those about Robin Hood. During the following century, moreover, they made up an important part of the literature; and for this reason, as well as to follow the days of "Romance" to their end, we shall include the fifteenth century with the Age of Chaucer. It must be clearly recognized, nevertheless, that the fifteenth century was a time of breaking-up, in both church and state. In less than a hundred years after Chaucer's death the Middle Ages had almost passed. The brutal Wars of the Roses are a convincing sign of how different the days of Henry VI were from the times of Edward III. In the same year that Caxton printed Malory's *Morte Darthur* (1485) the Tudors succeeded to the English throne; and though ballads and romances were still written for a time, with the Tudors modern England began.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340-1400).

Landor, in speaking of Chaucer's "enquiring eye" and tongue "varied in discourse," described the most no-

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ticeable trait in the poet's character. Kindly, humorous, familiar with men and their ways, Chaucer had the rare power of depicting all sorts of individuals so vividly that, though five centuries intervene, we feel at once as if we were members of his pilgrim company: we do not read *about* them; we see and hear them; we almost literally journey along with them and Harry Bailey the host on the Pilgrim's Way from Southwark to Canterbury. It is this power, coupled with his skill in narration, that makes Chaucer's greatness. He did not write great lyric poetry, and he does not often move us by high thoughts, but among his contemporaries no one could *see* characters or tell a tale as well as he.

Life. Chaucer was born in London about 1340. His father was a prominent vintner, connected with the Court, and the son served at the age of seventeen in the royal household. What education he had is not known, but, like most boys of his time, he was familiar with French and Latin¹ and he seems to have had a considerable knowledge of what then passed for science. His education in practical affairs continued all through his life, for he went to war, traveled, and held public office. At the age of nineteen he served in the French wars, was taken prisoner, and was ransomed by the king; in 1367, as a yeoman of the king's chamber, he received a pension, to continue for life, and soon after he was raised to the rank of squire; in 1370, and again in 1372, he was sent on commissions abroad; and in 1374 he was appointed Comptroller of the Custom and Subsidy of Wools, Hides, and Woodfells, and also of the Petty Customs of Wine in the

¹ Though his Latin is not above reproach.



GEOFFREY CHAUCER
From a painting by J. Houbraken

Port of London. He had married, probably about 1366, Philippa, a lady of the queen's chamber, who also received a pension from the Crown. Before he was thirty-five, then, Chaucer was in good case: well established at Court and befriended by no less a person than John of Gaunt.

By this date Chaucer's literary ventures had already



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

From a drawing by Joseph Pennell

begun. One of his first poems was his *Boke of the Duchesse* (1369), on the death of Blanche, John of Gaunt's wife; and his long *Romaunt of the Rose* also belongs to his earlier years. These verses show marked French influence, both in material and in style, as does his *Legende of Good Women* (about 1384). By the time he was forty, however, he had come under strong Italian influences, possibly dating from his commission of

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1372-3, when he probably visited Petrarch in Padua. Roughly speaking, his writing now showed the influence of this contact: *Troilus and Criseyde* (about 1382) reveals no less a debt to Boccaccio than *The Hous of Fame* (about 1384) does to Dante. Chaucer's greatest work, however, *The Canterbury Tales* (about 1375-95), is sturdily English; and though in its general plan, as in its plots, it shows foreign influence, it is entirely English in its setting, its characters, its humor, and its shrewd common-sense. Besides these chief works should be noted Chaucer's prose translation of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius, and his prose treatise on the use of the *Astrolabe* (1391), written for "Litel Lowis my son."

Till within fifteen years of his death Chaucer's prosperity continued. He was appointed to new posts of importance: in 1385 he was made a justice of the peace for Kent, and in 1386 he was elected one of the two knights to represent his county. From then on, however, he fell in favor, lost his comptrollerships, and seems to have been in rather narrow straits. On the return of John of Gaunt to England in 1389 he was given new positions, but his purse was never again very full, in spite of occasional pensions. On the accession of Henry IV he addressed to the king *The Complaynt of Chaucer to his Purse*, in which he says that he is shaved "close as a friar." Within a year, however, the poet died,—October 25, 1400. He was the first poet buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Works. In reading Chaucer the beginner is confronted with difficulties which seem great; but, though

a complete mastery of Chaucer's verse and language means extended study, the initial difficulties may be readily overcome. To get, for a first reading, the rhythm of the poet's meter, sound all final *e's* except when they are followed by a vowel, by a pronoun beginning with *h*, by the verb *have*, and by a few words in which the *h* is silent. This is the primary rule, though of course the nice placing of the accent and a knowledge of Chaucer's pronunciation are essential to accurate reading.¹ The chief obstacles of the language may be overcome by using a glossary for the unusual words and by telling the meaning of usual words from the *sound* rather than from the spelling. Here again, however, some knowledge of Middle English is necessary for an accurate reading. For, as we get to know our Chaucer, we learn to recognize the melody and beauty of his verse and his skilful choice of words; and we then realize that what seemed crude was due to our ignorance, not to any real defect. We must try to read Chaucer's verse, so far as we can, as he himself read it.

As Chaucer advanced in years, his poetry became more and more a reflection of his own power. We have noted how French and Italian models influenced his early and middle writing. It should be added, however, that even here he gave a new richness and life to old work. No maker of plots, he turned freely to the classics, to France, and to Italy for material; and he always wrote in riming

¹ For a full explanation of these points the student should consult Professor Skeat's *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Oxford, 1894. A good working knowledge may be gained from the introduction to *Chaucer's Prologue* in the Riverside Literature Series, Houghton Mifflin Company.

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meters either copied or adapted from continental models; but the humor, the brief descriptive phrase, and the vivid character-drawing are his own. A good example of how he improved on his models is the rare skill with which he fitted the stories in *The Canterbury Tales* to the various speakers. The idea of having a group of persons tell stories was no doubt taken from Boccaccio, but in the Italian's book the tales do not particularly fit the speakers, who themselves are colorless; Chaucer, on the other hand, gives us a vivid impression of each member of his group and then puts an appropriate tale into the mouth of each.

Chaucer's longest poem is his *Troilus and Criseyde*, partly translated from Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, a story that has been loved by poets ever since classic times. Chaucer's version has its chief value in the contrast that he makes between the tragedy of the lovers and the humor of the talkative old Pandarus. He does not slight the tale, but, unlike Boccaccio, he sets it off by making human beings of his characters.

The Hous of Fame, Chaucer's last work of the so-called "Italian period," shows the influence of Dante. The poem is put in the form of a dream, and Chaucer finds himself among a crowd of people seeking renown before the Goddess of Fame. But the poet, seeing the worthlessness of mere notoriety, mocks at it in the following words:

"Nay, forsothe, frend!" quod I;
"I cam noght hider, graunt mercy!
For no swich¹ cause, by my heed!
Sufficeth me, as I were deed,

¹ Such.

That no wight have my name in honde.¹
I woot ² myself best how I stonde."³

The poem is left unfinished, but it shows us Chaucer's position, that he does not consider himself an aspirant to literary fame, but that he is to sift the true from the false and to interpret all the confused sights and sounds in the House of Rumor. This is exactly what he does do in his *Legende of Good Women* and *Canterbury Tales*.

The Legende of Good Women, in honor of the queen, was to be a "glorious legende" setting forth the stories of twenty women faithful in love. Less than half was written, but the poem contains some of Chaucer's best verse, and is especially remembered for its prologue, in which the poet tells how May and the daisy alone can call him from his books:

And as for me, although I can ⁴ but lyte,⁵
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,

.

Save, certeynly, that whan the month of May
Is comen, and that the floures ginnen ⁶ for to springe,—
Farewel my boke, and my devocioun.

THE CANTERBURY TALES. Excellent as much of Chaucer's less known work is, it is entirely overshadowed by his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. In them his

¹ That is, *I don't wish to have any fellow (wight) taking care of my reputation, just as if I were dead.*

² Know.

³ Compare the different manner in which Milton renounces worldly fame in *Lycidas*, ll. 70-84.

⁴ Know.

⁵ Little.

⁶ Begin.

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humor, power of character-drawing, and skill in narration are seen at their best; while the whole poem is delightfully set off against the landscape of English spring. It is



THE TABARD INN, SOUTHWARK

the season of pilgrimages, and Chaucer meets at the Tabard Inn in Southwark

Well nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrymys were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ride.

The knight is there, a high-minded warrior, the pattern of chivalry,—

a verray parfit gentle knyght;

the squire, his son,

A lovyer, and a lusty bachelor,

who goes singing all day long,—

He was as fresh as is the month of May;
the dainty prioress, who

Ne wette hir fynGRES in hir sauce depe;
the hunting monk and the easy-going friar; the poor
parson, active in good works,—

But Cristes lore, and his apostles' twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe;

the spare Oxford scholar, who would rather

have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele,¹ or gay sautrye;²

the jolly wife of Bath, with her red face, broad hat, and hearty laughter; the stout, red-bearded miller; the "smooth," hypocritical pardoner; and, dropping furtively behind as they start to ride on their way, the lean and "colerik" reeve. But to know these interesting folk and the others who journey with them, we must follow them with Chaucer over the Kentish downs and must hear them tell their characteristic tales.

The plan of *The Canterbury Tales* is put into the mouth of Harry Bailey, the host at the Tabard, who suggests that each member of the company tell two tales going and two returning and who promises a free dinner to the one that "bereth hym best of alle." The first lot falls to the knight, who tells the story of the two noble kinsmen,

¹ Fiddle.

² Psaltery, a musical instrument.



THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS
From a painting by Thomas Stothard

Palamon and Arcite. The others ¹ take their turn, till twenty-four stories have been told.² Here Chaucer breaks off, but though one regrets that the book was not finished, the monumental fragment amply justifies the fame which the poet did not seek, but won.

OTHER POETS.

Contemporary with Chaucer and for a long time considered as great a poet, was JOHN GOWER,—“moral Gower,” as Chaucer called him. He wrote with skill in Latin, French, and English; and his *Confessio Amantis* bears the distinction of being the first English poem to be translated into foreign languages. Gower, however, lacked Chaucer’s vivacity and knowledge of the world; his work is learned to the point of pedantry.

¹ The beginner should read at least the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale* of “Chauntecler and Pertelote” and the *Clerk’s Tale* of “Patient Griselda.”

² The *Squire’s Tale* is left “half-told.”



THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

Among the followers of Chaucer the most conspicuous are JOHN LYDGATE and THOMAS HOCCKLEVE, both of whom wrote in the early fifteenth century. In their writings they show that the Chaucerian tradition was well fixed: from now on end-rime and the language of the Thames valley predominate in English literature.

It is largely on this account that Scottish poetry of the same date, in the Northumbrian dialect, seems old-fashioned. During the fifteenth century, however, especially while the Wars of the Roses ravaged central and southern England, the best literature came from Scotland and the Scottish border. JOHN BARBOUR, in Chaucer's century, had written the long tale of *The Bruce*; in the fifteenth century KING JAMES I wrote his beautiful *Kingis Quair*,¹ in which he tells of his courtship; and ROBERT HENRYSON, toward the end of the same century, made Scotland famous with his *Fables* and *Robin and*

¹ King's Book.

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Makyne, one of the earliest and most touching of popular songs.

THE BALLADS.

Popular songs, especially narrative songs, flourished in the fifteenth century. It was the time when some of our best old ballads were written down; and though certain important ballads may date from the preceding century or



EFFIGY OF JOHN GOWER, ST. SAVIOUR'S,
SOUTHWARK

the following, this fifteenth century is, above all others, the century of the ballad.

There has been much controversy about the origin of the ballads. Anonymous, they probably sprang from traditional songs, some of

them very old; and more nearly than any other form of literature we have they represent the growth of poetry from primitive dance and song.¹ In the shape in which we have them, though they were no doubt the work of unknown *individuals*, they carry such a stock of traditional expressions, especially in the burden, or refrain, that the author at once sinks into the background; the story is the thing, and it springs from the people. In other words, something like the following probably took place. A tale, such as one of Robin

¹ A good example of a similar growth may be seen in the old negro "spirituals," in contrast to such songs as "Swanee Ribber," obviously by literary individuals.

Hood, would be told over and over again at rustic gatherings; some fellow more skilful than the rest would tell it in rough verse, using the expressions that were common property in ballad-making; others of the group would perhaps come in with the refrain. But the verses, as yet unwritten, would be changed as each successive "maker,"



SHERWOOD FOREST

or poet, told the tale, till there grew up various versions of the same story, passed about by word of mouth. Finally, some Walter Scott of the fifteenth century would write out a version,—slightly different from the oral versions, perhaps a little smoother, more literary, but still preserving the rough strength and directness of the old communal poetry. The poem, moreover, would not be entirely the author's own work, in the sense that Kipling's ballads are his; and though it might become popular because the unknown author wrote it well, it would still be

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the people's ballad: for all practical purposes, it can be said to have made itself.¹

To see at a glance the communal nature of the old ballads one may compare the old form of *Sir Patrick Spens* with the later, embellished version. In the old form the story is told simply, compactly, in eleven stanzas; and the descriptive language is brief and vivid — the adjectives are not "worked up." In the longer version, which takes nineteen stanzas, the roughnesses are



MAJOR OAK, SHERWOOD FOREST

smoothed out, the details are elaborated, "guid sailor" becomes "skeely skipper," and such expressions as "gurly grew the sea" are added gratuitously. We begin to be aware of the desk, and the author takes on importance;

¹ For a fuller discussion of ballad origins see *The Popular Ballad*, by F. B. Gummere, Houghton Mifflin Company.

while, if we turn to wholly modern ballads, like Tennyson's *Revenge*, we see even more clearly the gulf which separates the impersonal old ballads from the artistic productions of individual poets.

Besides the *Robin Hood* ballads,¹ the most famous is probably *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, or the ballad of Chevy Chase, but others, such as *The Three Ravens*, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, and *Sir Patrick Spens* are almost equally familiar. Though the *Robin Hood* ballads come from Sherwood Forest, in Nottingham, a great number belong to the border between England and Scotland; for the petty feuds and outlaw adventures of that region offered abundant material for such poetry. Among these one of the best is the tale of *Johnie Armstrong*, an outlaw of Westmoreland. Invited by the Scottish king to Edinburgh, poor Johnie is blinded by the honor,—

Never was I sent for before any king,
My father, my grandfather, nor none but mee.

His men, he says, shall be dressed to suit the great occasion,—

Every won of you shall have his velvett coat,
Laced with silver lace so white;
O the golden bands an about your necks,
Black hatts, white feathers, all alyke.

But when he and his eightscore men come before the king, they are called traitors and are promised a speedy hanging.

¹ For a definition of the Ballad, as a form of poetry, see appendix, p. 410.

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But Johnie had a bright sword by his side,
And it was made of the mettle so free,
That had not the king stept his foot aside,
He had smitten his head from his faire boddē.

Saying, "Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For rather than men shall say we were hangd,
Let them report how we were slaine."

"Then, God wott, faire Eddenburrough rose" and made short work of Johnie and half of his men; and the ballad, without elaborate explanation, jumps from Johnie's dying words to the last stanza:

Newes then was brought to young Johnie Armstrong,
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Who vowed if ere he lived for to be a man,
O the treacherous Scots revengd hee'd be.

All the old ballads have this simple directness, this freedom from literary artifice. In them we are out-of-doors, hunting the dun deer, sailing the sea, following the open road. They are the most natural, spontaneous poetry in English literature.

MALORY AND CAXTON.

About the middle of the fifteenth century SIR THOMAS MALORY took the Arthurian story "out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English." Thus the old stories, originating for the most part in Wales, had crossed the Channel to France, had become popular in the romances of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, had been considerably changed, especially in the development of the Grail legend, and now recrossed the

Channel in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. There had been English versions of some of these stories, as we have seen; but Malory's book soon became the chief popular source of Arthurian tales, and it still maintains, though older versions have been discovered and printed, the first place in popularity as the record of Arthur and his knights. This popularity is largely due to the simple charm of Malory's style; except in a few cases, like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, none of the versions of the old tales were so well told as his. Some readers are indebted to the older versions for their intimacy with Tristram and Launcelot and Galahad; more owe a debt to Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*; but many of us have taken our strongest impressions from Malory. Living in the midst of the Wars of the Roses, he looked back to "the good old days" when knighthood flourished, to the times, now dead,

When trouvères chanted of old Lyonesse;

and his book is the last production of the great Middle Age, the age of fable and romance.

For WILLIAM CAXTON (1422?–1491), who printed Malory's book in 1485, was a chief figure in bringing about a new era. To supply the great demand for a book he had translated, the *History of Troy*, he studied the comparatively new art of printing.¹ His volume, issued abroad in 1474, was the first printed English book; and two years later he set up a press in Westminster. For the remainder of his life he was active in translating and printing. The almost incalculable influence of his

¹ Invented by Gutenberg about 1438.

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work, like that of the discoverers and inventors of his time, belongs to the next chapter, for he was a herald of the Renaissance.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1327-1377 1332 1346	EDWARD III Division of Parliament into Two Houses Battle of Crécy		Romances, see Chap. II Robin Hood Bal- lads, 14th, 15th, 16th centuries	
1362	English becomes lan- guage of law-courts	John Wiclif, 1324-1384 William Langland, ?1330- ?1400	Piers the Plow- man	Translation of Bible
1377-1399 1381	RICHARD II Peasants' Revolt	John Barbour, about 1375 GEOFFREY CHAUCER, 1340- 1400	The Bruce Canterbury Tales	
1399-1413 1413-1422	HENRY IV HENRY V	John Gower, ?1330-1400	Confessio Aman- tis	
1415	Battle of Agincourt	John Lydgate, early 15th Cent.	Falles of Princes	

CHRONOLOGY —(Continued)

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1422-1461	HENRY VI	Thomas Hoccleve, early 15th Cent.	Gouvernail of Princes	
1428-1431	Joan of Arc	James I of Scotland, 1394-1437	The Kingis Quair	
1450	Jack Cade's Rebellion		Miracle Plays	
1455-1485	Wars of the Roses		(see Chap. V)	
1461-1483	EDWARD IV	Robert Henryson, late 15th Cent.	Ballads	Translations
1476	Printing introduced into England	William Caxton, ?1422-1491	Fables	
1483	EDWARD V	Thomas Malory, late 15th Cent.		Morte Darthur
1483-1485	RICHARD III		Morality Plays	
1485	Battle of Bosworth		(see Chap. V)	

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
READING.

LITERATURE. CHAUCER. The standard edition of Chaucer is in 6 vols., ed. by W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press). A good one volume edition is the *Globe*, ed. by A. W. Pollard (Macmillan). The PROLOGUE, KNIGHT'S TALE, and NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE are well edited in the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton Mifflin). The most satisfactory life of Chaucer is by A. W. Ward, in the *English Men of Letters Series* (Macmillan). Lowell's essay on "Chaucer" in *My Study Windows* is one of the best brief reviews of Chaucer's work.

Barbour's BRUCE (Early English Text Society) and King James I's KINGIS QUAIR (Scottish Text Society) have both been edited by W. W. Skeat.

The best collection of BALLADS is *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols., ed. by F. J. Child (Houghton Mifflin). Of the numerous shorter collections, one of the best is *Old English Ballads*, ed. by F. B. Gummere (Ginn). Another is an excellent abridgement in one volume, by G. L. Kittredge, of Child's larger work (Houghton Mifflin). See also Gummere's *The Popular Ballad* (Houghton Mifflin), a good account of ballad origin and history.

MALORY. A good edition of the MORTE D'ARTHUR is the *Globe* (Macmillan). Suited to younger readers is Lanier's *The Boy's King Arthur* (Scribner).

SUGGESTED READINGS.

THE PROLOGUE and several tales from THE CANTERBURY TALES should be read. THE KNIGHT'S TALE, THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE, and THE CLERK'S TALE serve as a good beginning. The beginner can get a good idea of Chaucer's followers from the selections given in Ward's *English Poets* (Macmillan) and Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn). Several ballads

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should be read, especially the ROBIN HOOD ballads, SIR PATRICK SPENS, THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT, THE THREE RAVENS, THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL, and JOHNIE ARMSTRONG. If time allows, Malory should be read entire and in conjunction with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. J. Mackinnon's *History of Edward III* (Longmans) covers the first half of the period. Gairdner's *The Houses of Lancaster and York* (Epoch Series) covers the later part. *The Paston Letters*, ed. by Gairdner, a collection of private letters, give a vivid picture of the manners and customs of the 15th century. One should read also, in conjunction with this and the preceding chapter, Jusserand's *Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century* (Putnam); and Froissart's *Chronicles*, good selections from which are given in the Globe Edition (Macmillan). For other works dealing with the literary history see special chapters in books recommended on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. The period is well covered by Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, and *Richard III*. Further helpful reading is Charlotte Yonge's novel, *The Lances of Lynwood*; Southey's play, *Wat Tyler*; Drayton's *Ballad of Agincourt*; and Bulwer Lytton's novel, *The Last of the Barons*.

CHAPTER IV

THE RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance (or *re-birth*) is the name usually given to the transition from the mediæval to the modern world. In its widest sense it implies not merely a revival of interest in classic literature and art, not merely a religious protest against a dogmatic church, not merely a political protest against feudalism and outworn empire. It means what in part underlay these features of it and what in part proceeded from them: a new vigor in thought and action, a new interest in life. Yet it is at once too vague, complex, and stupendous to be compressed into a phrase. What it was, how it transformed Europe and made possible, as one instance, the Elizabethan drama, as another, the French Revolution, cannot be learned like a definition, but must be gradually understood, "read between the lines," in proportion as the spirit of all modern thought and action becomes familiar. Here we have space to consider only the more obvious features of the transition and to indicate, by an example or two, its spirit.

The Time. No exact limits can be set to the Renaissance. We must put aside the glib idea that the Middle Ages were "dark," till suddenly, as by a magician's touch, all was flooded with light. The first faint signs of the new age may be traced far back into the heart of the

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Middle Ages. Though in its early stages the growth of the new ideas was very slow, it accumulated force till in the fifteenth century it is clearly distinguishable on the Continent as a thing by itself. Among the reasons for this change is the fact that a new interest in the classics, and a new interpretation of the classics, strongly affected men's idea of life.

The Revival of Learning. To understand the influence of the so-called Revival of Learning we must remember the chief interests of the thinkers, or "schoolmen," of the Middle Ages. Though we have found such poets as Chaucer abundantly interested in human beings, the student of Chaucer's day, and especially the student during the three centuries before Chaucer, cared too often to discuss whether the Cherubim were higher than the Seraphim rather than what man in this world could or might do. Absurd as this sounds to us, we must not forget that the thought of the Middle Ages was dominated by the Church, which, though often practical, preached that the world and the flesh belonged to the devil; independence of thought was discouraged till it almost perished; ingenious and capable men, with their attention directed towards an imaginary world and their reason confused by superstition and dogma, contributed almost nothing either towards the development of thought or towards a practical solution of the problems of this world. The classics, at least the Latin classics, were familiar enough during this period, but the scholars, with their mediæval habits of thought, were incapable of understanding the true spirit of the ancient world.

During the fourteenth century, however, scholars who

followed the lead of the Italians Petrarch (1304-1374) and Boccaccio (1313-1375) began to read the classics with understanding. A whole new world dawned on them—not a world of knights errant and enchanted forests, not a world of monasticism, religious ecstasy, and dogma, but a world of beautiful, living men and women. As they became familiar with the thought and the beauty of Greek and Latin literature, they themselves gradually changed. By 1453, when the fall of Constantinople drove Greek scholars into Western Europe, Italians had become as keen in their search for lost manuscripts and unknown ideas as a century later all Europe became keen in its search for unknown lands beyond the sea. “I go,” said Cyriac of Ancona, “to wake the dead!”

In Italy, of course, this revival of interest in the classics,—in the “humanities,” as they were called,—was conspicuous for its influence on art.¹ But humanism² spread beyond the Alps; universities flourished; Spain awoke to a new literature, France to a new architecture, Germany to a new religion. All over Europe men began to think independently; and such thought bred new activity. This old world, as the humanities revealed it, was not the devil’s, but a fair place for man himself to live in, to enjoy, and to understand. It was an impulse which in time produced Democracy and Science.

Other Discoveries. It happened, moreover, that along with the revival of learning, and partly because of

¹ A glance at a painting by Giotto (1276-1337) and at one by Raphael (1483-1520) illustrates very vividly the difference between Mediæval and Renaissance conceptions of life.

² Humanism: the study of the classics and interest in the ideas of the classics.

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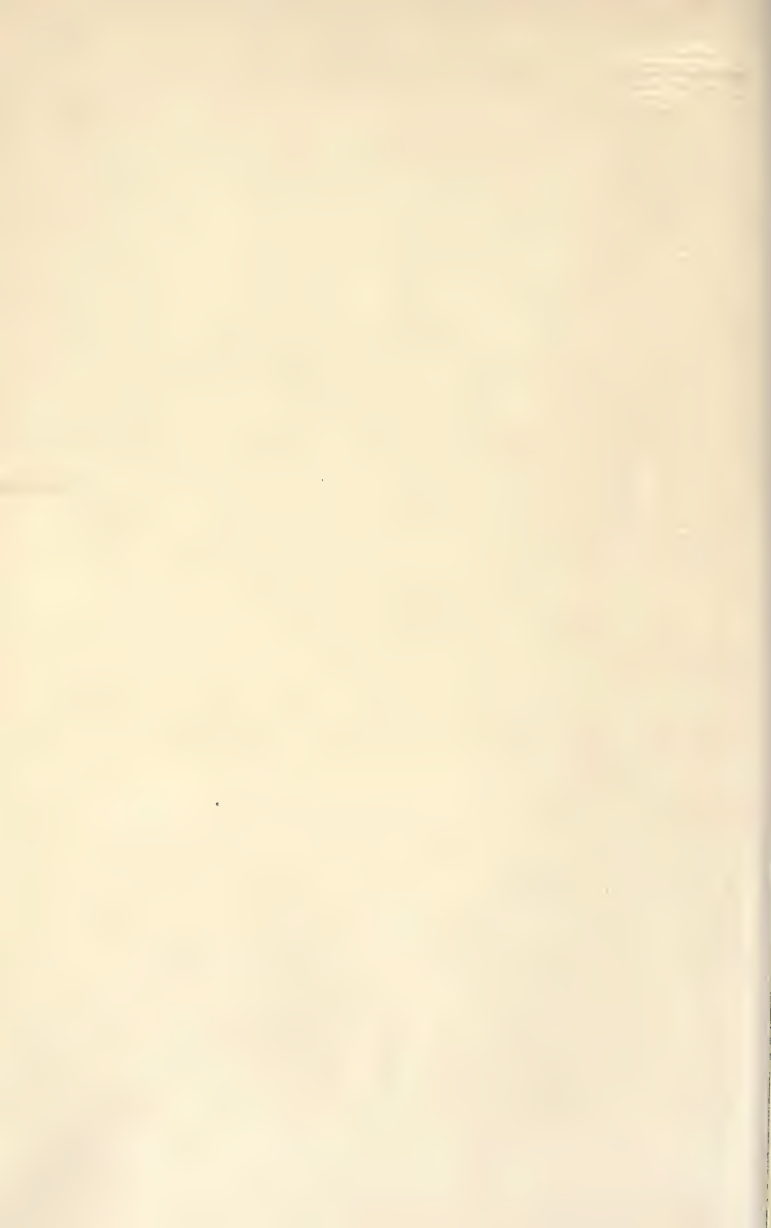
it, came inventions and discoveries, which helped greatly to spread to all sorts and conditions of men the new spirit of activity. Among the most important inventions were: gunpowder, which soon made mediæval warfare, and hence mediæval isolation behind castle walls, impossible; paper and printing, which played an almost incalculable part in putting hitherto inaccessible books, *with the ideas and ideals expressed in them*, into the hands of any who could read; the mariner's compass, which meant a world-wide extension of man's horizon. Indeed, the rapidity with which the Renaissance moved can be well illustrated by the geographical discoveries of the sixteenth century. Before 1492 the world as conceived by Europeans consisted of Europe and a few mysterious regions to the south and east; in less than a century a rough outline of the whole world was known. The names of Columbus, Cortez, Cabot, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, Frobisher, Drake, and Raleigh conjure up not only new lands, but a new life, in the western hemisphere, which, unknown to the people of the Middle Ages, became, with the Renaissance, a part of the modern world. Finally, though the old conception¹ of the universe was generally held for some time to come, Copernicus in the middle of the sixteenth century founded modern astronomy.

"Finally," however, cannot be said accurately of the effects of the Renaissance. From the same impulse, in the large, proceeded Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, in 1628, Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation, in 1685, and — if "finally" is to be used —

¹ The Ptolemaic, which held that the earth, surrounded by the sun, moon, and planets, was the fixed center of the universe.



*Earl Rivers presenting his Book & Carton his Printer
 to Edw. 4. the Queen & Prince: from a curious M.S. in the
 Archbishops Library at Lambeth. The Portrait of the
 Prince (after W^d Edw. 5th) is the only one known of him &
 has been engraved by Vertue among the Heads of the
 Kings. The Person in a Cap & Robe of State is probably
 Richard Duke of Gloucester, as he resembles the King.
 & as Clarence was always too great an Enemy of the
 Queen to be distinguished by her Brother. The Book
 was printed in 1477. when Clarence was in Ireland
 & in the beginning of the next Year he was murder'd*



the whole development of modern science. These, however, are entirely results and involve countless other influences. The actual period of the Italian Renaissance, of the transition from the old to the new, may be roughly covered by the fifteenth century.

The Renaissance in England. In England, on account of the French wars, the Wars of the Roses, and the geographical isolation, the Renaissance did not flourish till nearly a century after it had reached its height in Italy.

The Revival of Learning found its way across the Channel in the last decade of the fifteenth century. Grocyn, Linacre, and Colet, all of whom had



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SIR THOMAS MORE

studied in Italy, began teaching Greek at Oxford, and in 1498 the great Dutch scholar, Erasmus, arrived in England and became the chief figure in the spread of humanism. The most distinguished Englishman who sat at the feet of these men was SIR THOMAS MORE (1478-1535), the author of *Utopia*, or "Nowhere,"—a book which attacked the evil conditions of his day and pictured a fictitious country where men lived in wisdom and toleration. *Utopia*, written in Latin, was first published on the Con-

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tinent, for England was still intolerant of new ideas, but, expressing the views of many reformers of More's day, the book was widely circulated, receiving English translation in 1551.

Inspired by the same desire for learning and toleration, WILLIAM TYNDALE (?1484-1536), a great scholar and heroic man, made a translation of part of the Bible. Wiclif's version, written in Middle English, would not have been easily understood by the people of Tudor times, even if it had been widely circulated. Tyndale's version, therefore, is the first English translation of importance. His sturdy, simple style was taken as the model for nearly all subsequent translations of the Bible; the translators of the *Authorized Version* (1611), especially, preserved much of it in the book that has been read more than any other volume in English literature. But Tyndale himself, who was regarded by the authorities as a heretic, found even sterner opposition than Wiclif had met. Like More, he had to seek publication in Germany, where Luther's reform had made much ground for toleration. In 1535, at the instance of Henry VIII, Tyndale was arrested in Belgium, and the following year he was strangled and burned at the stake.¹

Another scholar who showed the influence of the New Learning was ROGER ASCHAM (1515-1568), a teacher at Cambridge University, tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, and Latin secretary under both Mary and Elizabeth. His

¹ Tyndale's martyrdom has additional pathos from the fact that, when shortly after, Henry VIII, now on the side of reform, ordered Miles Coverdale to translate the Bible, Coverdale frankly based his work on Tyndale's version.

chief works are *Toxophilus* (1545), a treatise on archery, and *The Scholemaster* (1570),—both remarkable for their beautiful English prose. Ascham was the first to recognize in practice that English, just as well as Latin, might be the language of serious prose literature.

The Renaissance spirit invaded poetry as well as prose. The way was pointed by two important pioneers, SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503–1542) and HENRY HOWARD, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547). These men introduced the sonnet, a form copied from the Italian Petrarch, into English literature; with the growing feeling for classical regularity in verse-form, they wrote with a smoothness which, in Surrey at least, far surpassed the work of the poets of their day; and Surrey, in translated portions of the *Æneid*, wrote the first English blank verse. A sonnet of Surrey's, called *Description of Spring, wherein each thing renews, save only the lover*, gives not only a good example of the language now changed to practically the same tongue as Shakespeare's, but abundant signs of the Renaissance: the sonnet-form, the delight in images taken from nature, and the fanciful sorrow of the lover.

The soote ¹ season that bud and bloom forth brings
With green hath clad the hill and eke ² the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle ³ to her make ⁴ hath told her tale:
Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter cote he flings;
The fishes fleete ⁵ with new repaired scale;

¹ sweet.

² also.

³ turtle-dove.

⁴ mate.

⁵ float.

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The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;¹
Winter is worn, that was the flowers bale;²
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

Before the reign of Elizabeth, however, the Renaissance did not bear abundant fruit in England. *The Songs and Sonnets* of Wyatt and Surrey were not printed till 1557, in *Tottel's Miscellany*; and this date, or the following year, when Elizabeth ascended the throne, is a convenient mark for the beginning of the great literary activity of the next fifty years.

¹ mixes.

² evil, enemy.

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1485-1509 1488 1492	HENRY VII Greek taught at Oxford Columbus discovers America	John Skelton, ?1460-1529	Ballads (see Chap. III)	
1497 1500 1509-1547	Voyage of John Cabot Painting flourishes in Italy HENRY VIII	Thomas More, 1478-1535	The Bowge of Court	Utopia (Latin)
1517	Beginning of Lutheran Reformation	William Tyndale, ?1484-1536 Miles Coverdale, 1488-1568 John Heywood, middle 16th cent. Nicholas Udall, 1506-1564	The Four P's Ralph Roister Doister	Bible Translation Bible Translation
1534 1547-1553	Act of Supremacy EDWARD VI	Thomas Wyatt, 1503-1542 Henry Howard, 1517-1547	{ Songs and Sonnets in "Tottel's Miscellany" (1557)	
1553-1558 1555	MARY Burning of Hooper, Ridley, and Latimer	Roger Ascham, 1515-1568	Moralities and Interludes (see Chap. V)	Toxophilus First Book of Common Prayer (1548)

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

LITERATURE. More's *UTOPIA* (translated), Ascham's *SCHOOLMASTER*, and TOTTIEL'S *MISCELLANY* are published in *Arber's English Reprints* (Macmillan). Good selections, for a first reading, can be found in *Century Readings* (Century), Manly's *English Prose* (Ginn), Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn), Craik's *English Prose*, 5 vols. (Macmillan), and Ward's *English Poets*, 4 vols. (Macmillan). Heywood's *FOUR P's*¹ and Udall's *RALPH ROISTER DOISTER*¹ are included in Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama* (Ginn).

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. Moberly, *The Early Tudors* (Scribner) and Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England* (Macmillan) cover the period fairly well. Symonds' *The Renaissance in Italy*, 7 vols. (Holt) is of course the standard work on the whole movement; if this is not accessible, his article, "Renaissance," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., at least should be read. For works dealing with the literary history see the list on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. Scott's *Marmion* deals with events in the year 1513. Miss Yonge's *The Armourer's Prentice* gives a picture of the reign of Henry VIII; Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* is set in the time of Edward VI; and Ainsworth's *The Tower of London* reflects the days of Queen Mary.

¹ See Chap. V under *Early Drama*.

CHAPTER V

THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

(1580-1610)

Soon after Elizabeth's accession the accumulated force of new impulses in many fields produced an era which has rightly been called "the golden age of English Literature." There were narrow religious quarrels, it is true; there were absurd fopperies, in literature as well as in the head-dress of the queen; but these things were partly due to the youthful exuberance of the period, the same quality that made its high hope, its "spaciousness." For England, like the rest of Europe, had been born again. The New Learning had stimulated intellectual activity. Now the daring voyages of England's sea-captains, the conflict with Spain, and the wisdom and magnetism of the queen brought about a vigorous national unity, which produced, between 1580 and 1610, a vigorous national literature. Youthful, indefatigable ardor is everywhere apparent in the age. Raleigh, old, in prison, attempted, like a careless boy, to write a history of the whole world; Bacon boldly took "all knowledge" to be "his province"; and the queen herself, fit representative of the time, could bandy jokes at one moment with her courtiers, turn to discuss poetry with Spenser or to argue religion with prelates, and then could give her unwearied powers

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to the business of the day and command difficult political situations. To the Elizabethan nothing seemed insuperable.

In England painting and sculpture did not flourish, as they did in Italy. Literature, especially poetry, was the glory of the English Renaissance. We shall now have to consider two of the greatest names in English poetry



QUEEN ELIZABETH
From a painting by Zuccherò

— Spenser and Shakespeare. Though it was natural that such an age should express itself chiefly in poetry, for it had aspirations and visions and beautiful thoughts to express, it produced, also, important prose, notably that written by Bacon.

EDMUND SPENSER (?1552-1599).

Poets have ever paid tribute to the memory of Spenser, "the soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains." This special character, of "the poet's poet," has now become true for another reason: Spenser has lost ground with a reading-public that usually seeks something other than beauty of verse. He never portrays vivid characters like Shakespeare's; he is rarely sublime, like Milton; his allegory is too involved to be pointed; his pastoral poetry,

an accepted convention in his own day, is no longer popular; and he deliberately uses language so archaic that his poems are sometimes difficult to read. Yet in his time he was hailed as the "New Poet"; and though many to-day may feel that they are taking his preëminence on faith, the "initiated" few read him eagerly, as they do Wordsworth and Shelley.

Life. Spenser, born in London about 1552, was the son of a cloth-maker, descendant of a well-known Lancashire family. Receiving a good education at the Merchant Taylor's School and at Pembroke College, Cambridge, he ranked well in scholarship and took the degree of M.A. in 1576. The next two years he spent at his family home in Lancashire, but in 1578 he went to London, seeking court favor and living at the Earl of Leicester's house. It was at this time that he formed with some friends a club for the purpose of driving end-rime out of English poetry. He did not live up to his theory, however, for his first important work, *The Shepheard's Calendar* (1579), is in rime. During these years his pen must have been very active, for it is recorded that he wrote nine comedies in the Italian style, though none of them was published.

Failing in his efforts to gain conspicuous favor at court, he accepted in 1580 the post of private secretary to Grey, Lord Deputy to Ireland. There he spent nearly all of his remaining years. In 1588 he was granted a tract of land near Cork, with Kilcolman Castle for his residence; and at this time he saw much of Sir Walter Raleigh, with whom he discussed the first part of his great poem, *The Faerie Queen*. Of this poem, which



EDMUND SPENSER

was designed to include twelve books, he published the first three in 1590, and, at Raleigh's suggestion, went to London to seek favor from Elizabeth. He had already been hailed as a great poet, and Elizabeth received him with compliments and a pension, but some one, probably Burleigh, opposed him and had his pension re-

duced to £50. Spenser returned disappointed to Ireland. The occasion, however, gave rise to one of his best poems, *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*¹ (1591).

In 1594 Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle and commemorated the event by eighty-eight sonnets and his poem called *Epithalamion*. The following year, with Books IV-VI of *The Faerie Queen*, he went once more to London, but was again unsuccessful. James VI of Scotland objected strongly to the uncomplimentary portrait, in the witch Duessa, of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots; Spenser's satire on the court, in *Mother Hubbard's Tale* (1591), a poem in Chaucer's style, had brought him unpopularity; and though the Earl of Essex took his part, the poet was forced a second time to return

¹ In *The Shepheard's Calendar* Spenser had given himself the name of "Colin Clout."

to Ireland, no better off than when he left. It was during this stay in London that he wrote his *Prothalamion*, for a double wedding at Essex House, and his *View of the Present State of Ireland*,¹ a prose pamphlet revealing the wretched condition of the peasantry and counseling stern treatment of the rebel papists. Spenser was not well loved in Ireland, and, a month after he was made sheriff of Cork, in 1598, a band of rebels burned Kilcolman Castle to the ground. He escaped with his wife and children, but four months later (January, 1599) he died, poor and broken-hearted, in London.



ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT, LAND'S END

Works. Spenser is a narrative poet, but his narrative is so vague that his chief fame really rests in his power of description and the melody of his verse. His first

¹ Not published till 1633.

poem of importance, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, is a pastoral in twelve parts, a division for each month in the year. It is a sort of allegory, picturing the superiority of a simple life over a court life; it favors the quiet humility expressed in

Ah, God shield, man,
That I should climb, or learn to look aloft.

Spenser's descriptive power, as well as his deliberately archaic language, is well shown by the following:

The carefull cold hath nypt my rugged rynde,
And in my face deepe furrows eld¹ hath pight:²
My head besprent³ with hoary frost I fynd,
And by myne eie the Crow his clawe dooth wright.⁴

In his *Prothalamion*, with its pleasant refrain,

Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song,

and in his *Epithalamion*, no less happy in its refrain,

That all the woods may answer and your echo ring,

Spenser shows that he could write good lyrical verse; though even here it is the descriptive passages that we prize,—such lines as those which picture his bride at the altar:

Behold, while she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks.

Without *The Faerie Queen*, however, Spenser would

¹ old.

² plowed.

³ besprinkled.

⁴ make, work.

have remained a minor poet; it is not only his best work, but, Shakespeare's plays excepted, it is the best poetic performance of the time. As was fitting for an Elizabethan, Spenser conceived a gigantic project, to write in twelve books a "continued allegory, or dark conceit," which should "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." A letter to Raleigh, from which the above quotations are taken, goes on to explain that, by the example of Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso, Spenser labors "to pourtraict in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private moral virtues, as Aristotle hath devised." "In that Faerie Queen," the poet goes on to explain, "I mean Glory in my general intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our sovaine *the Queen*, and her kingdom in Faerie Land." ¹

The allegory is so "dark" that Spenser, in the six and a half books he wrote, does not connect it clearly with Arthur. The first book pictures the Redcross Knight, expressing *Holiness*; the second, Sir Guyon, expressing *Temperance*; and so on. Arthur, setting forth *Magnificence*, was not to appear as the chief figure of one of the books, but as the perfection ("according to Aristotle and the rest") of the twelve virtues. One gets little satisfaction, however, if one reads the poem either for the story or for the allegory; one should seek, rather, the charm of "faery" and the melody of the Spenserian

¹ In the poem Elizabeth is called "Gloriana" when she is referred to as "a most royal Queen"; "Belphoebe," as "a most virtuous and beautiful lady."

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stanza.¹ With the first lines we are at once "in lap of legends old":

A gentle knight was pricking on the plain,
Ycladd in mighty arms and silver shield,
Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,
The cruel marks of many a bloody field;
Yet arms till that time did he never wield:
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdainng to the curb to yield:
Full jolly knight he seem'd and fair did sit,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit.

We are ready, after reading this, for haunted woodlands, sorcery, and fights with dragons. Spenser does not disappoint our expectation: stanza after stanza rolls along, revealing what Keats called "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance." Read, for instance, his description of a magic forest:

Fresh shadows, fit to shroud from sunny ray;
Fair lawns, to take the sun in season due;
Sweet springs, in which a thousand nymphs did play;
Soft rombling brooks, that gentle slomber drew;
High-rearèd mounts, the lands about to view;
Low-looking dales, disloign'd² from common gaze;
Delightful bowres, to solace lovers true;
False Labyrinths, fond³ runners' eyes to daze;
All which by nature made did nature selfe⁴ amaze.

¹ A stanza of nine lines, riming ababbcbcc; the first eight lines are iambic pentameter, the ninth is iambic hexameter (Alexandrine). Used a great deal in the Romantic revival (early nineteenth century), notably by Byron in *Childe Harold* and by Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

² distant.

³ foolish.

⁴ herself.

It is of small account that the poem is unfinished. Such a story has, properly, no real ending; the interest is in the changing scene.

This magic scene, these knightly quests, remind us of the mediæval romances, and it is towards them that Spenser has his face turned. He is full of the Renaissance, too; his imitation of Italian models, his sonnets, his advocacy of blank verse, in spite of his practice, remind us constantly that he is the contemporary of Shakespeare. Still, a little earlier than most other Elizabethans of note, he stands out conspicuously as the poet who links modern literature with the magic, faery past. Knight-hood is dead, but Spenser gives us a last, splendid picture.¹

OTHER ELIZABETHAN POETS.

SIR WALTER RALEGH (?1552-1618) was a true Elizabethan. Courtier, sea-captain, explorer, chemist, statesman, and poet, he stands as the representative figure of his times. Though little of his poetry has been preserved, it is significant that the following generation had a way of attributing the best anonymous poems of his day to him; and legend has it that he instituted the "wit-combats" at the Mermaid Tavern, later made famous by Ben Jonson. Living on into the reign of James I, he never got on well under the new régime; he was an *Elizabethan* to the end. And though much of his best writing was done during his imprisonment under James, his style, as well as his manner of life, connects him

¹ A few years after Spenser's death, the Spaniard Cervantes ridiculed in *Don Quixote* the outworn chivalry.

with the sixteenth, rather than the seventeenth, century. How well he could write is clear from the lines he penned the night before his execution :

Even such is time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days.
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

Raleigh's literary fame rests chiefly on his unfinished *History of the World*. His prose at its best is poetical, sonorous; the book, however, has very little value as history. A good example of this poetical prose of Raleigh's is his famous apostrophe to death :

O eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast perswaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawne together all the farre-stretched greatness, all the pride, crueltie, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet*.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586) was another typical Elizabethan. He stands more than any man of his age as the type of true gentleman, whose courtesy is well symbolized by the story that tells how, wounded on the battlefield, he gave his cup of water to a dying soldier. Like Raleigh, he is now known for what he did, rather than for what he wrote; but his powers as a poet seem to have cast a veritable spell over the writers of the early

seventeenth century; and well they might, for he was the first great Elizabethan, besides Spenser, to write with the skill so abundantly shown in the last fifteen years of his own century. Sidney's poetry is best remembered in his *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets, some of which gain a rightful place in every good anthology of English verse. The sonnet on *Sleep* is very near to Shakespeare, not only in its suggestion of the lines on sleep in *Macbeth*, but in its excellence as poetry.

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease¹
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

This sonnet, moreover, is an excellent illustration of the Elizabethan love of imagery, of piled-up figures of speech.²

Sidney's prose is not less important than his verse. His *Apologie for Poetrie*, in answer to Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse*, is a fine defense of the nobleness

¹ throng.

² Compare Shakespeare's lines in *Macbeth* (II, ii) especially, but also his sonnets and countless examples from his plays.

of true poetry. His *Arcadia*, a prose romance interspersed with eclogues, amounts to very little as a tale, but was nevertheless very popular during the last years of Elizabeth's reign, largely on account of its elaborate and fanciful style.¹

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631) is better remem-



THE DEATH OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

bered for his stirring *Ballad of Agincourt* than for his long geographical poem, *Polyolbion*. GEORGE CHAPMAN (?1557-1634), playwright as well as poet, takes his chief fame from his translation of Homer, so wonderfully praised by Keats.

To select these poets, however, to the exclusion of many others, such as Daniel, Warner, Greene, Lyly, Lodge, Marlowe,² and Campion, is to make invidious distinction. In a larger book all would have important places. Indeed, few periods in the whole range of English literature have produced so much good lyric poetry as appeared in the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign. Writing verses was considered part of the equipment of

¹ See Euphuism, p. 100.

² Several poets were also playwrights; see pp. 116-119.

Elizabethan gentlemen; and they seem to have had not only training in verse-making, but a positive instinct for it, an instinct which, among many extravagant "conceits," broke out in such lines as Marlowe's

By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE ¹ (1564-1616). Though Shakespeare's chief distinction is in the drama, he made his first literary fame, not as a playwright, but as a poet, the author of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). His *Sonnets*, written before 1598,² and the songs scattered through his plays would themselves place him in the first rank of contemporary poets. Take the vivid winter picture from *Love's Labour's Lost*, beginning

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

or Amiens' song, full of open-air companionship, in *As You Like It*,

Under the Greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,

or the solemn, musical dirge in *The Tempest*,

Full fathom five thy father lies:
Of his bones are coral made,—

and seek in all Elizabethan literature for songs more real

¹ For Shakespeare's life and dramatic work, see p. 119.

² Published 1609.

or more melodious. A good illustration of this very point is the song from *Cymbeline*, beginning "Hark, hark! the lark." Several years before, Lyly had written a beautiful song in which he used language that Shakespeare must have known:

Who is 't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
Now at heaven's gates she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.

Now read Shakespeare's lines and see how he transmuted what he touched to gold:

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty is
My lady sweet arise,
Arise, arise.

But, as Edward Dowden says, "it is almost an impertinence to speak" of these songs. "If they do not make their own way, like the notes in the wildwood, no words will open the dull ear to take them in."

EUPHUISM.

The fanciful style of Sidney's *Arcadia* expressed a common characteristic of the age. The same thing breaks out in the extravagant titles of Elizabethan song-books;¹ in Shakespeare's delight in puns and odd turns

¹ Such as *The Paradyse of Dainty Devises* (1576) and *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584).

of expression; especially in the festivals of the court. JOHN LYLY (1554-1606) set the fashion in his prose work called *Euphues: the Anatomy of Wit* (1579). The chief features of the euphuistic style are its labored antithesis, its alliteration, and its lengthy, elaborate similes — a sort of verbal gymnastics. One example will show the elaborate manner: "For as by basil the scorpion is engendered and by means of the same herb destroyed: so love, which by time and fancy is bred in an idle head, is by time and fancy banished from the heart." The alliteration is not so common as the antithesis and simile, but there are frequent instances, as: "I have loved you long, and now at the length I must leave you, whose hard heart I will not impute to discourtesy, but to destiny." Lyly, of course, was only the chief exponent of the style, the man who came to be called "the Euphuist."

Euphuism in its most pronounced stages turned out, like its cousin *bombast*, to be a very bad disease, a fact which no one saw more clearly than Shakespeare when he ridiculed it in such plays as *Hamlet*. In moderation, however, it was good for the roughness of many writers. Moreover, without some understanding of it we shall miss much of the point in Shakespeare's lines.

THE TRANSLATORS AND CHRONICLERS.

During early and middle Elizabethan times most of the prose written was either religious argument or narrative. Of the former much perished with the controversies that gave it birth. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563) or *Book of Martyrs*, however, was long popular with Protestants, for it sets forth with vigor and prejudice the

stories of martyrs burned in Mary's reign. While its religious nature gave it value in its own day, its worth to us lies in the vivid narrative. Of great popularity, too, were the narratives — translations from the classics and from Italian, and the "chronicles" of English history. These were of great service to Shakespeare and other playwrights, who drew on them for most of the material of their plots. Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1567) put into English such tales as Boccaccio had told in his *Decameron*; Sir Thomas North made a translation (1579) of a French version of Plutarch's *Lives*; and Holinshed's *Chronicle* (1577) and Stowe's *Chronicle* (1580) gave again the half-legendary story of Britain. To these two chronicles alone Shakespeare is indebted for the plots of nine of his plays. In another field of narrative Richard Hakluyt gathered together accounts of *Voyages touching the Discovery of America* (1582 and, enlarged, 1600). Another important volume was Florio's translation (1603) of the *Essays* of Montaigne. The above books, moreover, are only a few — types of literature common in the Elizabethan Age. Before the end of the century a reader, or a playwright looking for plots, could find most of the well-known stories of ancient Rome and recent Italy, as well as England's history, printed in English books. So far as knowledge of the stories went, it was of no matter that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek."

THE EARLY DRAMA.

By far the greatest literature of this Elizabethan period was the drama. In the first place, it did the work with

an unlettered public that to-day, when practically every one can read, is accomplished by books. The people went to the theater not only for the play, but for history, popular philosophy, and stories.¹ Yet mere popularity would not have produced greatness, any more than it has in modern fiction, if the drama had not sprung from the heart of the English people, and if the life which it reflected had not been vigorous and genuine. All the power of expression and appreciation, all the aspiration and experience which the New Learning and the recent discoveries had brought into men's minds and hearts were working in the force which produced the Elizabethan drama. Shakespeare and his contemporaries, coming at the end of Elizabeth's reign, emphatically took the tide at the flood.

Shakespeare's theater was very different from the theater of to-day. The actors, we are told, "instead of having to shout out to the audience from an encompassed box," "could speak their lines, as Hamlet demanded they should, 'trippingly on the tongue,' in something of the swift earnest speech of daily life, right amid the audience." The speaking, as well as the acting, must have been less artificial, less "over-done," on such a stage than in our modern "encompassed box." Again, the chorus in the Prologue to *Henry V* asks the audience to imagine that "this wooden O" is the field at Agincourt. Further, we hear of "groundlings" in the "pit," and of "gulls" with their "joint-stools" on the stage. What is meant by these things? How did they and many other

¹ Something of the same sort is being accomplished now by moving pictures — though without the human voice divine.



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INTERIOR OF THE FORTUNE THEATER, LONDON, BUILT IN 1599

The drawing is from Mr. Walter H. Godfrey's reconstruction from the builder's contract. Dimensions: Width of main stage, 43 ft.; depth of main stage to rear stage opening, 27 ft. 6 in.; depth of rear stage, 7 ft.; width of rear stage opening, 17 ft.; height of rear stage, 12 ft.

features of Elizabethan drama come to be? To understand Shakespeare's stage we must not attempt to transpose it, in our imagination, to our modern, highly deco-

rated platform, but must see it as it was; and to do so we must first go far back of it to the "Miracles" and "Mysteries" of the Middle Ages. For the Elizabethan drama, like all living things, was a growth.

THE RELIGIOUS DRAMA. The English drama had its chief origin in the Church.¹ Strange as this may seem when we compare the Church and the theater of to-day, it was very natural in the Middle Ages, when the Church took care of all of the instruction and of most of the amusements of the people. From song and dance, usually in celebration of victory, the villagers up and down England had no doubt come, at a very early time, to give crude representations of their heroes and mimic pictures of their local buffoons. This sort of drama, if it may be called such, probably preceded church plays, but without the intelligence and purpose of the Church it might have remained casual and crude. Certainly at a very early date the church festivals, the rites of which were dramatic in themselves, began to be made both popular and instructive by tableaux. At Christmas, for instance, the scene of the wise men at the manger would be represented by priests and their acolytes; each important festival — Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas — came to have first its pictures, then its tableaux; and it was a natural step from tableaux to acting, at first in dumb show, then with words. After the Norman invasion the development was marked, on account of the closer touch with France, where church plays were already common; and by the end of the twelfth century plays dealing

¹ In most countries the earliest dramatic forms are connected with religious festivals.

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with Biblical subjects were frequently acted in English churches. As these "liturgical offices" grew in importance and elaborateness, they ceased to be part of the service, though for a long time they were given by the priests, either inside the church, usually about a pillar of the main aisle, or just outside, on a platform erected at the south transept.

"Miracles" was the name given to these plays after they grew to be more than "liturgical offices." They presented stories taken from the Old Testament or from the lives of the saints. Those dealing with Gospel events only, particularly the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection, were sometimes called "Mysteries," but the two words are used loosely, almost interchangeably, to describe the religious plays which in England flourished from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

Simplicity is the chief mark of these early plays. Sometimes they seem very crude to us. For instance, in *The Creacion of Eve, with the Expellyng of Adam and Eve out of Paradyce*, God is made to say:

A ribbe out of mannys syde I do here take;
Both flesche and bone I do thys creatur blysse;
And a woman I fourme, to be his make,¹
Semblable to man; beholde here she ys.

Yet we must not forget the simplicity of the audience and the sincerity with which they listened to the terrible voice of God. Many plays, long after they had left the precincts of the Church, retained the pointed moral, if not the actual benediction, at the end. Here and there a

¹ mate

bit of foolery, as Noah's beating his wife for talking too much, was introduced to keep up the interest of the crowd; but the main effort was serious, and the attention of the audience was never far from the reverence of communicants.¹

In the thirteenth century, Miracles came little by little to be taken from the hands of the clergy, and by the latter part of the fourteenth century they were acted almost entirely by the different guilds, or unions of craftsmen. These companies went from town to town with large wagons, called "pageants," on which they set up a stage in the market-place. Frequently they gave their plays in cycles: that is, one company, say of carpenters, would present the story of the creation, another, say of tailors, the story of Abraham and Isaac,—and so on; till in the course of a week the citizens of a particular town, as the wonderful pageants rolled up and passed on, might see enacted the whole story of the Bible.

MORALITIES. Later than the Miracle Play, and a modification of it, came the Morality, in which man, the central figure, was beset by personified vices, such as Sloth, Intemperance, and aided by personified virtues, such as Reason, Honest Recreation, till finally Satan was trodden under foot. Such characters of course lacked the vivid individuality of Biblical personages, most of the Moralities proved very heavy and tedious,² and buffoonery was often introduced to enliven them. Thus we

¹ An elaborate Miracle Play is still given every ten years by the peasants of Oberammergau in Bavaria.

² *Everyman*, recently revived with great success, is a notable exception.

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get the Vice, not an incarnation of evil, but a clownish fellow, who frequently won applause by beating the devil or any one else with his lath-sword, and who was the direct ancestor of the Shakespearean Fool.¹

INTERLUDES. While the Moralites were still popular, the Interludes appeared. These, as their name implies, were "plays between,"—little humorous sketches, sometimes between the acts of more serious plays, sometimes between the courses at a great nobleman's banquet. A well-known example is *The Foure PP*, "a newe and very mery Enterlude of A Palmer, A Pardoner, A Potecary, A Pedlar." But these Interludes carried some of the religious convention of the older plays, and *The Foure PP* ends with its benediction:

Besechyng our Lorde to prosper you all
In the fayth of hys Church Universall!

Plays, however, were gradually growing secular; so that by the reign of Edward VI the first English comedy, *Ralph Royster Doyster*, appeared. The old religious drama, starting with the Church, passing into secular hands, assimilating the horse-play of village dances, and finally losing its identity in the Interlude, which under John Heywood (about 1540) became a play by itself, was the chief ancestor of the farcical side of Elizabethan comedy. In nearly every one of Shakespeare's plays

¹ "Like to the old Vice,—
Who, with dagger of lath,
In his rage and his wrath
Cries, ah, ha! to the devil."

Twelfth Night, IV, ii.

there are characters and scenes which we shall not understand if we do not know something of what went before. For, though we may invent plausible explanations of the Porter scene in *Macbeth* or of the Grave-digger scene in *Hamlet*, we must not forget that the Elizabethan play-goer needed little or no explanation, that he saw relatively few plays without such scenes.

In the same audience, moreover, which contained those delighted by the buffoonery of Launcelot Gobbo, were others appreciative of the fine lyric speeches of Jessica and Lorenzo. For this side of Elizabethan comedy we must look, not to the old drama, but to the influence which set in so strongly with the Renaissance. We have already seen that a new lyric power, at its best in the songs and sonnets of Shakespeare, had come upon the English people. Life to them had the freshness of the dawn; their poets caught the rapture of it; and it runs through their drama like the clear song of the lark. The Renaissance brought also, as we have seen, a renewed interest in the classics; and, realizing this, we understand how the *pastoral* element became popular in English comedy. For, though *Touchstone* in *As You Like It* is in direct descent from the Vice of the old Moralities, the general background of the play, the pleasant woodland scene, could not have sprung from anything in the old plays; lyric and pastoral, it is an example of the classical influence at its best. Equally noticeable is the effect of the classics on tragedy. For, while the old English influence was plodding along in rough comedy and chronicle plays, the chief writers of tragedy in the early years of Elizabeth's reign were university men, familiar with the classics, and they imported

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into their writings many of the un-English features of classical tragedy. In *Gorboduc* (1562), for example, no deaths take place on the stage, and the play is written in stilted blank verse. But the Elizabethan informality soon broke through artificial restraints; so that by the time of Shakespeare a certain classical dignity and a store of classical plots were all that remained of the academic influence.

THE ELIZABETHAN THEATER. After the pageants in the market place and before the regular theaters, inn-yards figured conspicuously in the presentation of plays. These inn-yards were directly responsible for giving us three important features of the early theater: the galleries, which in Tudor times ran round the inn-yards; the ground, open to the weather and forerunner of the "pit"; and the stage more or less in the midst of the audience.¹

The first actual theater was built in 1576 by James Burbage, and, since there was no other, it was called "The Theater." The following year the "Curtain" was built. Both of these theaters stood just outside of Bishopsgate. All of the public theaters, in fact, were required by law to be "without" the city walls, on account of growing Puritan aversion to "play-acting," as an idle, pernicious pastime, to be associated with bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and other sports banished by the city fathers. *Private* theaters, which had developed from

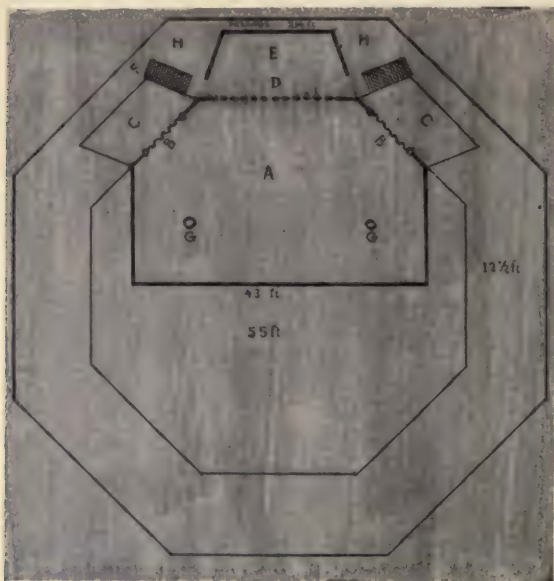
¹ Contrast the Greek theater, with its seats in a semicircle rising gradually toward the back, its pit unoccupied, and its stage entirely in front of the audience. The modern theater is an elaborate, roofed-in development of the two theaters. The pit is occupied of course, but instead of being "standing-room," as in the Elizabethan theater, it is the best place, or "orchestra seats."

court performances (as *public* theaters developed from inn-yard performances) were allowed within the walls. These buildings, of which "Blackfriars," 1596, is the best known example, were often used for masques¹ and court festivals as well as for plays; performances at them were in the evening, with candles; and the price of admission was higher than at the public theaters. The most popular place for the public play-houses was the Bank-side, or south side of the Thames, just west of London Bridge. Here, in the neighborhood of the rings for bull-baiting and cock-fighting, stood the "Rose," 1592, the "Swan," 1594, the "Globe," 1599, and the "Hope," 1613.

The inn-yards were rectangular in shape, but the theater-builders soon found a circular, later an octagonal, structure best adapted to their needs. Within, two or three galleries, directly above each other, ran round seven of the sides. These galleries, which were roofed over, offered obviously the best seats. The space surrounded by the galleries was called the pit; it had an earthen floor, was open to the sky, and was without seats. Projecting from the eighth side far into the pit was the stage, divided into three parts. Above the rear part of it rose a tower, higher than the galleries and surmounted by a flag when a play was in progress. At the second floor was usually a small gallery, from which hung a curtain, and just above this gallery projected a roof, supported by pillars half-way out towards the front of the stage. This middle portion, be-

¹ A masque was a poetic comedy, with music, dancing, and elaborate costumes. It was usually given in some nobleman's house, frequently in the hall of a castle or palace. Milton's *Comus* (1634) is an excellent example of a masque. See p. 184.

tween the tower and the pillars, was probably curtained in some theaters. The front part of the stage, never hidden from the audience, was the platform on which the



GROUND-PLAN OF ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

- A — Main stage
- BB — Doors for exit and entrance, probably hung with curtains
- CC — Second-story boxes used to represent a balcony or windows
- D — Gallery on level of second story
- E — Inner stage. FF — Stairs
- GG — Columns supporting the loft, or "heavens" over the stage

principal acting took place; the middle portion gave room to those who did little speaking; and the rear stage served either for entrances or, with the curtains drawn, for such scenes as the vision of "Banquo's line" in *Macbeth* or the "play within the play" in *Hamlet*. As the actors walked

"down stage," especially if there was no curtain between the pillars, they had considerable space to traverse, perhaps thirty feet; and to fill in the awkward pause some introductory dialogue, or soliloquy if the actor was alone, was an obvious necessity.

The scenery and the costumes of the public theaters were too simple to represent places and characters with anything approaching modern realistic stagings. Some scenes, especially in the earlier days of the theaters, were indicated merely by signs displayed on the pillars. A common device was to accomplish the same by spoken indications, as in *Henry V*, when the Prologue asks his audience to imagine "the vasty fields of France"; and when the hour changes to night in the *Merchant of Venice*, the lights are not turned down, for it is the middle of the afternoon, but the change is clearly indicated by Lorenzo's "The moon shines bright" and by Portia's "That light we see is burning in my hall." Insufficient perhaps to us, but the Elizabethan play-goer, unused to calcium lights, accurate costumes, and expensive scenery, found no difficulty in conjuring up the scene. To him the play, not the mechanical ingenuity of the stage-manager, was "the thing."¹

A word as to the actors. The men's parts were taken by professionals; often, however, as in Shakespeare's case, the actor might be playwright too. The women's parts were taken by boys, often choir-boys because of their superior voices. If it is hard for us to imagine Desdemona played by a boy, we can understand easily

¹ Compare the modern Chinese stage, where the scenery is even more a matter of imagination.

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the complete illusion when so many of Shakespeare's women (for instance Rosalind, Viola, Portia) masquerade as boys or men. These players were banded into companies, in place of the guilds and strolling actors, and under the patronage of some rich man. Thus we find "St. Paul's Choristers," "Lord Leicester's Company," the "King's Players."

To the public plays went all sorts and conditions of people — courtiers and poets like Raleigh, gulls¹ like Chester, a noisy fellow whose beard and mustache Raleigh tied together, and the wondering rabble. But it was not the unknown audience of a great modern city; the population in and near London in Shakespeare's time numbered about 200,000; and the playwright knew intimately what his audience wanted. Perhaps we can better visualize the scene if we imagine ourselves attending an Elizabethan play on a fine summer afternoon.

We embark at Blackfriars stairs, let us say, and, our oarsman crying "Eastward Ho!" to the passing boatmen, we are rowed down stream, with the houses and palaces of the city, dominated by the spire² of St. Paul's, on our left, and green fields at first, then a fringe of houses, on our right. Just before we reach London Bridge we land, pass through a noisy and rather vulgar throng bound for the bull-ring, and make our way to the Globe, where we find the crowd in holiday humor for a

¹ A gull is fairly well defined by the modern slang term, "cheap sport,"—a sort of vain coxcomb, who "stands in presence stroking up his hair." There is an amusing account of how a gull should behave at a play in Dekker's *Gulls Horn-book*.

² The present St. Paul's, with the dome, dates from the following century.

performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. Taking seats in the first gallery, we have time to look about us, for the play has not yet begun. The pit is already full, for it's first come first served there, full of small tradesmen, laborers, and sailors, crowding each other in good fun. Here a group is listening wide-eyed to the stories of a bronzed, rakish-looking fellow, just back from the Americas with tales of "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders"; there another group is making merry over a dapper little draper, who has slipped and gone down on the muddy floor, still wet from last night's rain; nearer the stage a small crowd is calling good-natured gibes at some gulls, who sit on their three-legged joint-stools on the stage itself and evidently hope that their fine clothes and elegant disdain of the rabble will catch the eye of that great courtier in the gallery. If they could only hear him, as we can, they would discover that he is complaining earnestly of the nuisance these gulls are becoming and that he intends to speak to the Lord Chamberlain about it. But now the galleries are full, a horn sounds from the tower, silence strikes even the gulls, and from behind the front curtain step Sampson and Gregory, then Abram and Balthasar, to begin a street-fight that "captures" the pit at once. Later the curtain is drawn, to allow an ampler stage for the Capulets' ball; at another time Juliet appears on the balcony above and wins the approval of the great courtier by her melodious lines:

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

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Courtier, burgess, and cobbler watch the play through with close attention till, finally, the whole theater is stirred by the tragic death of the young lovers.

It would be a great privilege if we could really hear, as we now dimly imagine them, Shakespeare's lines spoken from an Elizabethan stage. How much better we should understand the buffoonery for the pit, the quips and puns for the fantastic courtiers, the effect of scenery and costume produced by the actual lines, and, above all, the naturalness and vividness of action and language in our very midst.

SHAKESPEARE'S FORE-RUNNERS. Between 1580 and 1590 there was rapid development in the Elizabethan drama. Comedy was still largely farce, and tragedy was chiefly swaggering bombast — "in King Cambyzes' vein." It was chiefly in the "chronicle-play," based on history as told in North's *Plutarch* and Holinshed's *Chronicle*, that the art of making plays developed. These chronicle-plays were very popular, for they gave information and plot — what the Elizabethan wanted far more than subtle characterization — and in them appeared at one time or another nearly all the historical subjects of Shakespeare's plays. These dramatizations, as has been pointed out, took the place of books of travel, history, and philosophy, and, with a similar type of play based on the stories given in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, they took the place, too, of novel and newspaper.¹ Shakespeare himself spent most of his early years working in this semi-historical field.

The best work before Shakespeare was done by a

¹ See p. 103.

group of university-bred men, who gathered in London in the eighties, formed a sort of play-acting and play-writing coterie, and set stage-craft well forward in a decade. Loose-livers, spendthrift, and wretched, few of these men outlived their youth. Greene died from a surfeit of herrings and Rhine wine at the age of thirty-two, and Marlowe was killed in a drunken brawl when he was only twenty-nine. Still, tavern-roysterers though they were, they brought to their work both genius and classic culture. Overshadowed by Shakespeare, their contribution has been too often belittled — except indeed by those who make them entirely responsible for Shakespeare's greatness! At least they raised the English drama from many of its crude archaic ways; and from them Shakespeare learned his craft. George Peele, author of the *Old Wives' Tale*, Robert Greene, author of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and Christopher Marlowe are the greatest names among these pioneer playwrights; but only one of them, Marlowe, stands far above his fellows.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593). Born in the same year as Shakespeare, killed in 1593, Marlowe wrote at least one play, *Edward II*, which surpassed anything Shakespeare had written up to that time. His other plays were: *Tamburlaine*, the story of the Scythian conqueror of the East; *Dr. Faustus*, the first dramatized version of the Faust “saga”; and the *Jew of Malta*, the story of one Barabas, who strove for “infinite riches in a little room.” Probably he had a hand in other plays; like most Elizabethan poets, he was a master at writing lyrics;¹ and he

¹ The song beginning “Come, live with me and be my love” is the most famous.

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left a large part of a long poem, *Hero and Leander*, which was finished by his friend Chapman. It is to Marlowe that Shakespeare pays tribute in *As You Like It*, quoting one of the "dead shepherd's" lines:

Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw¹ of might,
"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

Marlowe is important, however, not only for the excellence of his plays, but for his championship of blank verse. Ever since Chaucer, end-rime had been popular in English poetry, especially in the drama; and, though there had been one or two efforts in heroic² verse without rime, Marlowe was the first to take a successful stand. In the prologue to his first play, *Tamburlaine*, the author promises to lead the audience away

From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay.

The result was what Ben Jonson called "Marlowe's mighty line"; through all his plays it moves like an ocean surge — whether in the picture of

the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium;

or in the shout of *Tamburlaine* to his commanders,

Usumcasane and Theridamas,
Is it not passing brave to be a king,
"And ride in triumph through Persepolis?"

¹ Saying, maxim.

² That is, iambic pentameter. Notably in Surrey's *Translation of the Æneid* and in *Gorboduc*.

or in the sad words of Edward, up to his knees in dungeon water,

Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.

About the date of Marlowe's death Shakespeare, a young man who had served his apprenticeship in recasting old plays, found a theater well developed, but with traditions still making, ready to throw to the winds all convention that obstructed the vivid and the true. He found, also, an audience interested in life that ran all the way from the foolery of Touchstone to the lyric passion of Romeo, from the hard selfishness of Cassius to the searching philosophy of Hamlet. And he brought the highest genius to his work.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616).

Shakespeare's friend, Ben Jonson, said that "he was not of an age, but for all time"; and Landor, two centuries later, pointed out that Shakespeare was not merely the poet of England, but of the world. Whether as dramatist or poet, he has reached more hearts and minds than any other English writer; and, by common consent, he is accorded a place so high that only two writers in the whole history of the world, Homer and Dante, are counted his peers.

To understand this eminence of Shakespeare it is necessary, not only to realize how ripe the time was at the end of Elizabeth's reign for literary work of the highest quality, but to appreciate the singular excellences of Shakespeare himself. Something of this sort is what

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students of Shakespeare have been trying to do for three centuries, and the fact that they have not yet written the final word is the best proof of the greatness of their subject, of the *universal character* of his genius. Explanation has already filled volumes. Discussion of his characters, for instance, comprising such diverse figures as Hotspur and Hamlet, Richard II and Henry V, Goneril and Isabella, would show only a single view of the variety of his powers; one must take into account, also, the variety displayed in his verse and in his thought. Coleridge's phrase, "our myriad-minded Shakespeare," though it covers a great deal, fails to suggest the isolated perfection of the great dramatist's work, the sheer excellence which gives the variety worth.

To suppose that Shakespeare was always at his best would of course be absurd. In fact, the only way in which we can really appreciate his best is to follow his development, to see how he learned to use his tools,—to realize, in short, that "the Shakespeare of heaven" grew out of "the Shakespeare of earth." Moreover, if we are to understand his plays, we must consider them in the light of the stage for which they were written. There will always remain, nevertheless, the baffling genius which raised the imperfect to the perfect; but that we cannot analyze; we can only wonder at it.

Life. Though we know few facts of Shakespeare's life, it should be noted that our knowledge of him is fuller than that of other dramatists of his day. The playwright of Elizabeth's time was not, like Bacon, a public person, whose life would be fully recorded. He was not even a literary figure till Ben Jonson gave him something

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L O N D O N

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of that character, but was, as his name implies, a maker of plays, who wrote, not for publication, but for the stage, and whose work became entirely the possession of the company for which he wrote. Hence a mediocre dramatist might die quite unsung, as most of them did. The knowledge which we have of Shakespeare, beyond certain family and legal information, points therefore to



SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE, STRATFORD

the fact that he was not considered a mediocre playwright, but one of sufficient distinction to receive occasional mention.

The son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, the poet was born at Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, in 1564. He was baptized on April 26; and tradition has long counted April 23 the date of his birth. His father, by occupation a glover, held various prominent positions in Stratford, becoming in 1568 high bailiff, the chief municipal officer. Shakespeare's boyhood, therefore, was in one of the chief families of a vigorous market-town.



GRAMMAR SCHOOL, STRATFORD

There is no reason to doubt that he attended the Stratford grammar school, the ordinary course for such a boy. There he would have acquired a more proficient knowledge of the classics than is now common in our best secondary schools. What other education he received he must have picked up for himself; there is strong presumption that he never attended any other institution. But he must have had the faculty of turning information to knowledge and power; and with such a man a little information counts for much.¹

But this is to anticipate. The first knowledge we have of Shakespeare's doings after his school days is based on his marriage license, granted in 1582, when he was only eighteen. His wife was Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior, who lived nearby at Shottery.

¹ A familiar example, in another field, is Abraham Lincoln.

Shakespeare had three children, Susanna, born in 1583, and Hamnet and Judith, twins, born in 1585. Of his occupation at this time we have absolutely no knowledge. It is usually supposed that he went up to London about 1587, but the first mention of him there is in 1592, when Greene, one of the university playwrights, refers to him bitterly in his *Groat's-worth of Wit* as "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide*,¹ supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." These words would seem to indicate that by 1592 Shakespeare had begun to make his way as a recaster, if not a creator, of plays; though the "upstart" would point not only to the fact that he was an "outsider" to a university-bred man, but to the supposition that his prominence was of recent origin.

What led Shakespeare to London is entirely conjecture. There is good evidence that, while he was a boy, his father had failed in business; and it is perhaps sufficient to assume that, like many an enterprising lad, Shakespeare turned to the great city. A popular story runs that he fled from the lash of a neighbor, Sir Thomas Lucy, whose deer he had stolen; and the story is somewhat supported by the figure of Justice Shallow, in the *Merry Wives*, an imbecile country squire, with a "dozen white lues" on his "old coat."²

The first work given by the theaters to such a person

¹ Paraphrased from Shakespeare's *Henry VI*.

² The Lucys had "three lues" in their coat-of-arms.

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as we must imagine Shakespeare to have been would be the acting of small parts, if not actually servile positions, such as holding horses at the door, as one story runs. At all events, we know that Shakespeare was an actor, and following Greene's reference to him, that he soon showed skill in making over old plays. By 1594 we find him a regular member of the Lord Chamberlain's company, and for this company, so far as we know, he wrote all of his plays. Again it is only supposition, but a fair one, that he had by this time served some five or six years, at the least, as actor and recaster of old plays; and by 1594 he had learned play-making well enough to write *Romeo and Juliet*.¹ Marlowe was dead, and Shakespeare was now without a peer.

That Shakespeare succeeded in a worldly way is beyond doubt. In 1597 he purchased New Place, one of the most important houses of Stratford; and two years later he acquired a considerable share in the Globe Theater. It may safely be assumed that his financial success was responsible for his father's application for a coat of arms, in 1596, in order to reestablish the family among the "gentry." During the last five years of the century, moreover, some of Shakespeare's best plays were written — such pieces as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. On good testimony we may picture him now as both a successful and well-known playwright. Francis Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury*, a sort of literary handbook published in 1598, says: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the

¹ For a complete list of the plays see p. 133.

Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage."

Shakespeare's active connection with the theater, probably less as an actor than formerly, though we are told that he took the part of the ghost in *Hamlet*, continued to about 1611. His writing in the seventeenth century may be divided into two periods: 1601-1607, and 1608-1613. To the first of these periods belong his great tragedies, beginning with *Julius Cæsar*¹ and including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens*. At this time he wrote no chronicle-plays and only two² comedies, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, neither of them comedy in much more than name. In the second period (1608-1613) he again turned to comedy and wrote *Pericles* (part), *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. The chronicle-play *Henry VIII* and the tragedy *Two Noble Kinsmen*, neither of which Shakespeare wrote the whole of, also belong to this last period. Altogether, seventeen of his plays were published in quarto³ editions during his life-time; thirty-six in the "first folio" (1623); and three more are usually ascribed in part to him and are now included in his "complete works."

Shakespeare probably spent his last years quietly at Stratford. After 1611 his active work as a playwright

¹ Possibly as early as 1599.

² Possibly three, if *Troilus and Cressida* belongs to 1602.

³ A quarto is a book in which each sheet is folded twice, making four leaves, or eight pages. A folio sheet is folded once, making two leaves, or four pages. Most books of to-day are in octavo, that is, eight leaves, or sixteen pages, to each sheet.

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ceased. His daughters were married and living at Stratford; and, in addition to New Place, he had purchased an estate in Old Stratford and had taken the lease of certain tithes in Stratford parish. He died on April 23, 1616, and was buried under the chancel of Stratford church. "Kings," wrote Milton in his lines prefaced to the second folio (1632),—

Kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

The personal appearance of Shakespeare has been much discussed. Most of the "portraits" unfortunately are not authentic, but it is usually agreed that the one prefixed to the first folio edition is a good likeness. This portrait, however, gives little satisfaction; the face, especially the eye, of so great a writer, must be seen in animation to be understood; and unhappily we have not even



STRATFORD CHURCH AND RIVER AVON

a reliable description, such as Scott has given us of Burns, of how Shakespeare looked when he was talking. We may reasonably believe, however, that Shakespeare, "when animated in company," was, like Burns, "a man in a million." Fuller in his *Worthies* (1662) tells of the "wit-combats" at the Mermaid Tavern: Jonson was "like a Spanish great galleon; . . . Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Regarding Shakespeare's character we have, also, little direct testimony. Besides various rather insecure reports of his conviviality, we have first of all Chettle's apology, in 1592, for Greene's attack: "I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he excellent in the qualitie¹ he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art." More important is the testimony of Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's intimate friend. The players had told him that Shakespeare wrote so hastily that he "never blotted out a line," and Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden that "Shakespeer wanted arte"; but he said, too, that his friend was "Honest and of an open and free nature," and added, "I lov'd the man and do honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any." Further, we have Jonson's generous praise in the verses prefixed to the first folio. Though

¹ The acting profession.

we may not safely conjecture Shakespeare's character in detail, we may reasonably conclude that he was brilliant, genial, and kindly; and we cannot read his plays without realizing, too, that he understood human nature to the bottom.

How much we can construct his thought and his inner life from the plays is wholly a matter of opinion. The *Sonnets*, far more personal than the plays, persuade us easily that he was a man of a highly sensitive nature, a man who had bitter experience of "the pangs of disappointed love"; and Wordsworth says that

With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart.

But Browning answers:

Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!

Though we may feel that Wordsworth is right, that the inner Shakespeare is revealed in the *Sonnets* (even if we must remain mystified as to "Mr. W. H.," to whom they are dedicated, and as to the identity of the "dark lady" of the later numbers), we must take an entirely different position in regard to the plays. Dowden has found here, too, a faithful record of Shakespeare: in the early plays an apprentice "in the workshop"; in the plays of the second period (1595-1600) a happy, accomplished dramatist—"in the world"; in the tragedies a doubting, struggling, "perturbed spirit"—in "the depths"; and in the serene comedies of the later years a man who was waiting quietly for the end—a man "on the heights." We may confidently assume that Shakespeare experienced all of these phases, but not in such

definite order; we must recognize that he was writing his sonnets, *de profundis*, at the very moment that this critic would make him happy "in the world." In other words, Shakespeare's plays represent not so much his individual development in character as his development as an artist. To write "Hamlet" he must have felt, in imagination, the misery of the unhappy prince, but there is no reason to suppose that he *was* Hamlet any more than that he was Polonius; and there is, further, no reason to suppose that the temper of the plays gives any clue as to the circumstances of his life. It is more profitable to consider them in themselves, to note, by comparing them, the growth of his power as a poetic and dramatic artist.

Shakespeare's Plays. Before discussing the plays it is necessary to recall the condition in which Shakespeare found the drama and to know approximately the dates of their production. In the early nineties, when Shakespeare began to write, the university men, especially Marlowe, had raised the drama from roystering farce and dull imitation of classical tragedy to good chronicle-plays, clever comedies, and bombastic, bloody tragedies,—to the condition fairly represented by *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Titus Andronicus*. In addition Marlowe had successfully championed blank verse, though rime was still much in vogue and the blank verse of 1593 was still monotonous and heavy. No one but Marlowe in *Edward II* had depicted characters of Shakespearean excellence.

We do not know exactly the dates of most of Shakespeare's plays, but from a variety of evidence — the men-

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tion of the plays in contemporary books, the reference in the plays to historical events, and the development of the verse and dramatic art — we can make approximations. The following table¹ will show that Shakespeare wrote on the average two plays a year and that they may roughly be divided into four periods: two, of about five years each, before 1600; and two, of about seven and five years, after 1600. We shall discuss, not necessarily the greatest plays, but representative plays from each period.²

¹ Prepared from the table given by E. K. Chambers in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th Edition.

² *The Baconian Theory*. During the past sixty years there has been an attempt to prove that Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, but the theory has not received support from many careful students of the case. Though it has never been absolutely proved that the Shakespeare who is reputed to have written the plays was the Shakespeare of Stratford, there were in Shakespeare's time plenty of men, such as Ben Jonson, who would have had little reason for concealing the fact after both Shakespeare and Bacon were dead. The argument of the "Baconians" that Shakespeare could not have been well enough educated to write the plays is itself invalidated by their other argument that we know very little about Shakespeare; while their argument that a man about whom we know so little could not have written such famous plays is reasonably met by the fact that we know far more about Shakespeare than about most of the dramatists of his time, and by the further fact that these dramatists, about whom we know so little, certainly wrote plays which were for a while about as famous as Shakespeare's and which show quite as much learning. Such arguments, together with others of a similar nature, prove no more than that we are not absolutely *certain* that Shakespeare wrote the plays; they in no way prove that Bacon was the author; while the character of Bacon, about which we know a great deal, does not reveal at all the kindliness, humor, and romantic nature so obviously part of the character of the real author, whoever he was. Furthermore, the Baconian "ciphers"

DATE	COMEDIES	CHRONICLE-PLAYS	TRAGEDIES
1591-2		Henry VI (part)	
1593	Comedy of Errors	Richard III	Titus Andronicus (part)
1594	Taming of the Shrew		Romeo and Juliet
	Love's Labour's Lost		
1595	Two Gentlemen of Verona	King John	
	Midsummer Night's Dream		
1596	Merchant of Venice	Richard II	
1597		1 Henry IV	
1598	Much Ado About Nothing	2 Henry IV	
1599		Henry V	Julius Cæsar
1600	Merry Wives of Windsor		
	As You Like It		
1601	Twelfth Night		Hamlet
1602	All's Well that Ends Well		
	Troilus and Cressida ¹		
1603	(Theaters closed on account of plague)		
1604	Measure for Measure		Othello
1605			Macbeth
			Lear
1606			Antony and Cleopatra
			Coriolanus
1607			Timon of Athens
1608	Pericles (part)		
1609	Cymbeline		
1610	Winter's Tale		
1611	The Tempest		
1613		Henry VIII (part)	Two Noble Kinsmen (part)

prove nothing; it has been shown that by the same method Oliver Wendell Holmes can be proved to have written Homer's *Iliad*. The facts, as well as the best credible tradition, point to the conclusion that the Shakespeare of Stratford was the same man as Shakespeare the actor and the author of Shakespeare's plays.

¹ Possibly belongs as late as 1609.

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THE FIRST PERIOD (1591-1595). *Henry VI* (*Part I*), at the very beginning of Shakespeare's career, is largely in the style of his predecessors: a steady-going, loosely-constructed chronicle-play, with no great interest either in the plot or in the characters. Though much of it was probably not written by Shakespeare, parts that are usually attributed to him show a crudeness which he soon outgrew. The following speech of the elder Talbot's (Act IV, sc. vii) represents well the character of the verse, with the chief pauses at the ends of the lines:

O thou, whose wounds become hard-favour'd death;
Speak to thy father ere thou yield thy breath!
Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;
Imagine him a Frenchman and thy foe.—
Poor boy! he smiles, methinks, as who should say,
Had Death been French, then Death had died to-day.—
Come, come and lay him in his father's arms.
My spirit can no longer bear these harms.

The Comedy of Errors, probably Shakespeare's first effort in comedy, amounts to little more than farce. The plot is the old one of mistaken identity, with plenty of confused, farcical situations; there is little pretense at either beauty or sentiment; and no characters of distinction are created. The verse, often riming, sometimes doggerel, is full of quips and puns; and, like the verse of *Henry VI*, it is "end-stopped," with monotonous result. Here is a fair example (Act I, sc. ii):

Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late:
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell;
Thy mistress made it one upon my cheek.

She is so hot because the meat is cold;
The meat is cold because you come not home;
You come not home because you have no stomach;
You have no stomach having broke your fast;
But we that know what 't is to fast and pray
Are penitent for your default to-day.

Perhaps the important thing to note about *The Comedy of Errors* is that, even in a play which gives little opportunity for real poetry, Shakespeare is already showing in certain speeches the poetic power which later exalts all his plays, whether plot or character is the thing; a good example is the speech of Belthazar (Act III, sc. i) :

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!
Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honour of your wife.

Romeo and Juliet was the only tragedy, if his part in *Titus Andronicus* be excepted, that Shakespeare wrote in this first period. Far better executed than *Henry VI*, it bears nevertheless unmistakable signs of apprenticeship, not only in the frequently riming, end-stopped verse, but in its subject — the tragedy of youthful passion. The plot depends on a feud between two Veronese houses, Romeo of one, Juliet of the other; and the tragic ending is brought about, not by fate or the development of character, as in Shakespeare's great tragedies, but by a clever device: Juliet, feigning death to escape marriage with Paris, is reported dead to Romeo, who kills himself; then she, finding her lover dead, stabs herself in despair. In this play, however, more than in any of the first period,

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Shakespeare has conceived vivid characters. Though Romeo and Juliet are rather conventional types, they stand out with clearness; and Mercutio, pictured in a few words, belongs among the distinguished figures so common in plays of Shakespeare's mature genius. In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare's lyric power, apparent in the songs in other plays of the period, such as *Love's Labour's Lost*, frequently takes possession of the spoken lines, breaking out in such melody as

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops,

and the large, imaginative power, noted in Belthazar's speech in *The Comedy of Errors*, rises, in Romeo's last words (V, iii) into "the sheer splendour of speech":

O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.

The end of the first period, then, shows Shakespeare's mastery of essentials well developed: an ability to handle plots, to distinguish characters, and to write, now Marlowe was dead, better verse than any of his contemporaries.

THE SECOND PERIOD (1596-1600). The great advance made in the second period lies in the conception of characters, in a deeper comprehension of the main-springs of human action, and in verse which frees itself from the limitations of Shakespeare's predecessors. As in the first period, the dramatist gives his attention to comedy

and chronicle-play;¹ *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Henry V* are good examples. In both of these plays Shakespeare shows a great advance in character-drawing, particularly in Shylock, Portia, and Gratiano in the first, and in the King, Fluellen, and the Hostess in the second. In both, too, he shows a mastery over verse-form and a power of sustained excellence unseen in his early plays. Such speeches as Portia's famous address (IV, i), beginning

The quality of mercy is not strained,

the fine lyric passages between Lorenzo and Jessica (V, i), and King Henry's two stirring exhortations, one before Harfleur (III, i) and the other before Agincourt (IV, iii), give criticism pause; we feel that Shakespeare now, whatever his thought or emotion, can express "in corresponding speech." The last lines of Henry's speech before Agincourt show well, not only the poetic splendor, but the technical skill which gives the poetry a chance:

For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.²

¹ The tragedy, *Julius Cæsar*, though it comes at the end of the second period, may be counted properly the first of the third period.

² If the suggestion of bombast in this recalls Shakespeare's earlier verse, we should compare it with Talbot's clumsy lines in *Henry VI*, quoted above; and we should remember, furthermore, that *Henry V*

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Two further points, showing Shakespeare's development, should be noted. The first is his growing sense for the dramatic effect produced by contrast, suspense, and sudden, overwhelming naturalness. A good example of this sudden naturalness is seen at the close of the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, when Shylock, instead of raving or complaining in reply, says simply:

I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well.

We shall see this power of Shakespeare's still more fully developed in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. The other point is his humor. Throughout his career he never lacks for humor, but in his early plays it is usually broad jesting; in this second period, especially in such plays as *As You Like It*, it takes on the rarer quality that is near to sentiment, sometimes even to pathos; it has the "touch of nature" that "makes the whole world kin."

THE THIRD PERIOD (1601-1607). In this period the most noticeable features, besides its general superiority to the other periods, are the increasing interest in the development of the characters and the now unerring instinct for dramatic effect. In the plays written at this time we no longer find the development dependent upon a trick of the plot, as in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet*; it depends, rather, on the conflict between the chief characters and the conditions in which they are placed. In *Julius Cæsar*, for instance, the idealism and guileless confidence of Brutus must fail among was written for patriotic purposes — a condition calling for oratorical speeches.

people who are determined to have some sort of Cæsar to worship; in *Hamlet*, the unhappy, hesitating prince cannot, without tragic result, set right a world that is "out of joint"; in *Macbeth* "vaulting ambition" meets the inevitable fall; in *Lear* the whim of a foolish king brings on a coil of "complicated injustice." This interest in the characters, which makes them, not the victims of blind fate, but the victims of their own characters at war with the course of nature, produces the highest sort of tragedy: it "holds the mirror up to nature." So great, indeed, is our interest in the characters that we lose sight of the fact that to the unthinking Elizabethan such plays as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* were "tragedies of blood," popular for the slaughter that takes place right and left. In *Hamlet* King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, Hamlet — all the principal figures but Horatio — die, with the exception of Ophelia, on the stage; in *Macbeth*, which begins with the tale of Macbeth's "brandish'd steel,"

Which smok'd with bloody execution,

the play moves through a succession of murders and wars till at the last only Macduff and Malcolm, of the chief figures, are left alive. In the first act of *Hamlet*, however, our attention is called away from the mere events of the play to the problem of the prince; and the lines (I, v)

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy,

fix our chief interest, not in the *revenge* of Hamlet, but

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in Hamlet himself. Similarly, in *Macbeth*, such lines as Macbeth's (I, iii),

Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings,

and Lady Macbeth's (I, v),

Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear,

start us wondering about the ambitious Thane of Cawdor and his terrible wife. In either play, moreover, our wonder is stimulated by the background, the atmosphere of the piece: in *Hamlet*, the mystery of ghosts and "the witching hour of night," the spirit of jesting with substantial, corporeal things; in *Macbeth*, the dogging and uncanny prophecies of the "weird sisters." Similarly, the effect of delay is heightened in the one by digressions, such as Hamlet's talk with Polonius and the gravediggers; while in the other the effect of swift retribution is heightened by directness and brevity,—from the moment Fleance escapes, the "return action" comes "blow on blow." In both plays, too, there are abundant instances of Shakespeare's sense for dramatic effect; none is stronger than the restraint of the lines when Macbeth comes downstairs after the murder of Duncan (II, ii):

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did you not speak?

Macbeth.

When?

Lady Macbeth.

Now.

Macbeth.

As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth.

Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*]

Lady Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Finally, in the verse of this third period, Shakespeare is at the top of his power. Flexible and natural, exalted by imagination till they fit the vastness of the thought, the lines seem to be part of the very stuff from which the characters are made. Only Hamlet, of all Shakespeare's characters, could have spoken, *quite* appropriately, the "To be or not to be" passage (III, i); only Hamlet could have spoken the lines —

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

The poetry of this period, moreover, besides being appropriate, abounds in what appears occasionally in the first period and frequently in the second — "the sheer splendor of speech." Citation might occupy pages; what is meant is perhaps sufficiently indicated by Macbeth's soliloquy (II, i) just before he kills the king:

Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murther,
Alarum'd by his sentinel the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

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In the third period, then, we find Shakespeare at the height of his dramatic and poetic art.

THE FOURTH PERIOD (1608-1613). The most



SETTING FOR THE SHIP SCENE IN "THE TEMPEST"

Drawn by J. Hambidge

noticeable characteristic of this period is, not that Shakespeare advances or falls off in his art, but that he tries his hand in a different field. He turns again to comedy. These plays, in marked contrast to the mirthful comedies of his earlier days, show a serenity which argues, many think, that Shakespeare had passed through his period of doubt and difficulty, represented by the tragedies of the

third period, and had now settled his mind for the "quiet consummation" of old age. The theme now is reconciliation through the influence of a woman; and worldly disaster through the weaknesses of man is averted by beneficent magic. In the *Tempest*, for example, Prospero's wand and his servant-spirit Ariel bring about what literal fact might refuse. The bestial character of man, moreover, is given definite shape in this play in the groveling, half-human Caliban, as if to show that the baser powers of nature can never prevail against those whose lives are controlled by the magic of nobleness and love.¹

In the verse of this period, Shakespeare shows a variety of form and a compactness of thought which are confusing; the ordinary mind cannot follow easily the rapidly moving ideas through the broken verses. Here is a fair example (*Tempest*, III, i):

I am, in my condition,
A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king; —
I would, not so! — and would no more endure
This wooden slavery than to suffer
The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides
To make me slave to it; and for your sake
Am I this patient log-man.

The defect, however, is rather the reader's than the author's; it is as if Shakespeare had grown beyond speaking to the ears of ordinary men.

Though this confusing compactness of thought and

¹ Compare Milton's "strong-siding champion, Conscience," in *Comus*.

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phrase is generally characteristic of Shakespeare's later work, these plays make, through their characters and their temper of sweet serenity, an appeal to all. They close with singular fitness, moreover, the career of a man who at one time or another had struggled with "thick-coming fancies," who had felt "the yoke of inauspicious stars." Here, at the end come "calm seas, auspicious gales."

SUMMARY. In following Shakespeare's work through the twenty years from 1591 to 1611 we have seen that during the first period of about five years he is writing farcical comedy, mechanical chronicle-play, and two tragedies; during the second, comedy and chronicle-play; during the third, tragedy; and during the fourth, comedy. In this development his interest grows from mere plot-making in the first to subtle character-drawing in the second, and in the third and fourth to a larger idea which controls both plot and characters. His verse, starting in the monotonous, end-stopped style of his predecessors and disfigured by an excess of euphuistic "conceits" and bombast, grows into a living expression of the characters who speak it. The early Elizabethan drama created Shakespeare, but he created the English drama.¹

BACON AND ELIZABETHAN PROSE.

Poetry was the chief glory of the Elizabethan Age; English prose in anything like its modern idiom did not develop till a century later. There were, however, two distinct kinds of English prose during Shakespeare's time. One of these was the simple, narrative style of the chron-

¹ Shakespeare's successors in the Elizabethan Drama are treated in Chapter VI.

icles, a sort of living-on of the mediæval prose of Malory. This same style, embellished with euphuistic flourishes, may be seen in Sidney's *Arcadia*; or, popularized into a sort of prose doggerel, in the pamphlets of Greene, Dekker, and Nash; or, simple and effective, in the translation of the Bible. Most of the serious prose, however, was in a kind of Latin English, as if it had been first written in Latin and then literally translated. The best example of this, as indeed the best Elizabethan prose, Bacon's *Essays* excepted, is RICHARD HOOKER'S (?1554-1600) treatise *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. The following sentence gives an idea of the special, Latin character of this English: "Neither are the Angels themselves so far severed from us in their kind and manner of working, but that between the law of their heavenly operations and the actions of men in this our state of mortality such correspondence there is, as maketh it expedient to know in some sort the one for the other's more perfect direction." Ponderous as this style was, its stateliness and rhythm needed only simplicity and directness to make it the vehicle of Dryden, Addison, Burke, and Lincoln.

Bacon was the only man in Shakespeare's day to write with a directness and vigor that suggest the later English prose. For this he has been called the first great writer of truly English prose. This special, modern character, however, appears only in isolated sentences; his style, taken as a whole, is essentially the Latin English of his contemporaries. Two examples may be cited to show the two kinds of sentences.

"For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man" is the kind

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of sentence for which Bacon is famous. But the next sentence in the same essay might have been written by Hooker: "Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find faith upon the earth.*"

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626).

Life. In Bacon's life two characters stand out distinctly: that of the unsteady aspirant to high office and that of the clear-headed student. In the former Bacon showed ability and vigor, but small power of living serenely in the public eye. In the latter he showed a breadth of wisdom and a keenness of insight that have been unsurpassed in English history. The love of display that made his public life both expensive and picturesque contrasts no less strangely with the simple austerity of his thinking than his dubious actions and final disgrace contrast with his high regard for truth. Incompatible as these two characters seem, they had a common nature in Bacon's powerful sense of fact. In politics, where self-seeking was the rule, he turned this power to unworthy ends; in scientific pursuits, where his service was of truth, he marked a new era in the history of thought. As Shakespeare is the greatest poet of the Elizabethan Age, so Bacon is its greatest thinker.

Bacon was born in London on January 22, 1561. His father was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, his mother was a woman of remarkable intelligence



FRANCIS BACON

From the portrait by Paul Van Somer in the National Portrait Gallery, London

and high ideals, and his uncle by marriage was William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's chief minister. As far as family influences went, no boy could have had a better chance. Responding to his opportunities, Bacon showed early that he had a brilliant mind: he entered Cambridge University at the age of twelve;¹ and Queen Elizabeth is said to have called him playfully her "Young Lord Keeper." At sixteen we find him living in France with the English ambassador, where he remained for two years. The death of his father in 1579 and a narrower income in consequence recalled him to England and legal studies. Admitted to the bar in 1582, he was two years later elected a member of Parliament. In 1585 he addressed to the queen a "letter of advice," full of wisdom that one might have expected from a man of long experience. Three years later he became a leading figure and one of the best speakers in Parliament; "his hearers," says Ben Jonson, "could not cough or look aside from him without loss."

This early fame Bacon sought to supplement by playing the courtier; but in spite of his legal and literary attainments, in spite even of his friendship with Essex and his appeals to his powerful uncle, he failed during Elizabeth's reign to gain an important post. The cause may be partly explained by the strong opposition he met from Edward Coke, who was given the appointment as Attorney-General in preference to Bacon and who throughout his life blocked Bacon's way wherever possible. But Coke was not the only cause of Bacon's fail-

¹ He was not alone in this distinction, as he would be to-day, but twelve was nevertheless far below the average.

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ure; the vigor with which, as Coke's assistant, he argued the case against his patron and friend, the Earl of Essex, on trial for treason, gives one an insight into Bacon's shifting loyalty: it is fair to assume that Burleigh and the queen actually feared to entrust high office to so unreliable a man.

From Bacon's public life one turns with pleasure to his private studies. It was in a famous letter to Burleigh in 1592 that he stated the deepest interest of his life: "Lastly, I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends; for I have taken all knowledge to be my province." He then goes on to say that if he could purge knowledge of foolish discussions and absurd guesses, he hopes he should "bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries." Here is the true modern spirit, the spirit which was to produce in course of time the patient accuracy and practical results of modern science. It is true that Bacon neither practised careful investigation nor understood some of the great scientific advances of his day (the Copernican, for example), but he expressed for all time the departure from the mediæval attitude to the modern; and scientists still take inspiration from his keen insistence on proceeding from fact to theory, instead of from theory to fact.

Though Bacon's scientific inquiries did not bear fruit till the next century, there was ample evidence of his scholarship in the *Essays*, the first of which were published in 1597. The vigorous English, as well as the learning and wisdom, of these essays has made them the best-known of all Bacon's works, but the author, mis-

trusting the language in which they were written, caused them to be put into Latin. In 1605 he brought out the *Advancement of Learning*, his first great scientific work, the book which more than any other, except his great unfinished work in Latin, the *Novum Organum* (1620), set forth his championship of the scientific method,—“industrious observations” and “grounded conclusions.”

With the accession of James in 1603, Bacon's chances in public life looked brighter. He was knighted by the king — though “gregarious in a troop,” to his great displeasure. In 1606 he married with considerable pomp an alderman's daughter, of whom little is known. Moreover, he became a great leader in the House of Commons and received the post of Solicitor General in 1607. Nevertheless, till the death of Robert Cecil, Burleigh's son, in 1612, his way was still blocked by Coke; then, however, he triumphed over his rival, with not a little evidence that he enjoyed the sweet revenge. In 1613 he gained the office of Attorney General; in 1616 he contrived to have Coke removed from the office of Chief Justice; and the following year he was appointed Lord Chancellor. Made Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans shortly after, Bacon now had reached the summit of his political greatness.

Under a foolish king, who was ruled by an unscrupulous favorite, Buckingham, such prominence was precarious. In 1621 Bacon fell suddenly and entirely from power. He was accused of taking bribes, confessed his guilt, and begged the House of Lords to be “merciful to a broken reed.” He was fined £40,000, sent to the Tower during the king's pleasure, was banished from Court and

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Parliament, and was forbidden ever to hold office of any kind.

Bacon's way of taking bribes, it must be understood, was exactly what many of the men who condemned him had done; it was a practice of the times to take gifts from successful suitors. Bacon's decisions were probably not affected by the presents. The amazing thing is that he offered no defense, that he submitted so weakly to what was mainly a political plot against him. Great as his disgrace was, and pitiful as his weak submission seems, however, his attitude brings out, too, what was best in him, what has really made his fame. Bacon the scientist, the author of the *Advancement of Learning*, seems suddenly to have turned with contempt from Bacon the political favorite; seeing beyond his own personal disgrace, he said: "I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure that was in Parliament these two hundred years."

Bacon's fall, indeed, was to the world's advantage, for it forced on him the private life in which he was at his best. It is pathetic enough to find him always hoping for a full pardon and a renewal of public service; vanity and the desire of "great place" were with him to the end; but though his confinement in the Tower was brief, he never again held office. In the leisure now at his disposal he turned, at sixty years of age, to write scientific and historical books. Of these the *History of the Reign of Henry VII* (1622) takes literary rank beside the *Advancement of Learning*. Soon after his death, April 9, 1626, his *New Atlantis* was published, though it was written a dozen years before. As the *Advancement of*

Learning had been a sort of introduction to his theory of science, so the *New Atlantis*, picturing the application of his theory to government in an imaginary land, amounts to a sort of conclusion; it closes fitly the life of one who, whatever his political greatness and disgrace, was the Aristotle of the Renaissance.

Bacon's Essays. In reading the *Essays* one is impressed, as in all Bacon's writings, by the author's sound sense. He never rises into rhapsody or strays into the fanciful — though among his subjects are such as "Truth," "Love," "Friendship," "Beauty." Yet this practical nature does not limit him to narrow bounds, either of thought or expression. If it must be noted that he again and again shows a conspicuous lack of poetic vision, it must be realized that he handles, usually in a practical way, nearly every subject of human experience. The special merit of the essays, then, lies in their wisdom on a variety of subjects, their amazing compactness, and the brief, vivid sentences in which they abound. "Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark";—"Revenge is a kind of wild justice";—"Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New";—"Virtue is like a rich stone,—best plain set";—"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested";—it is such sentences as these that have distinguished Bacon's prose from the heavy Latin periods of his contemporaries.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

The Age of Elizabeth was earnestly Protestant. As a result the Bible was translated many times between Tyn-

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dale's work in the reign of Henry VIII and the accession of James I. In 1604 a convocation of scholars was called, and a new translation was ordered. This version, which is usually known as the "authorized" or "King James" version, appeared in 1611 and is still the Bible used in most of the churches in England and America. Apart from its vast moral influences, it has done more than any other book to fix the character of the English language. This power springs partly from the fact that during the seventeenth century there was a tremendous religious movement — a time when, as Green says, England became a nation of one book, the Bible; but the singular influence of the King James version springs chiefly from the vigor and simplicity of its language. The translators, men contemporary with Spenser, Raleigh, Bacon, and Shakespeare, worked at a time when the English language was in the fresh vigor of a new youth — a national tongue, yet flexible, unhampered by long usage. Wise enough, moreover, to retain the best features of former translations — the rough vigor of Tyndale, for example, and the sonorous words of the Rhemish New Testament — they were able to express memorably such different parts as the wild triumph-song of Deborah, the simple story of Ruth, the thunderous outbursts of Isaiah, and the educated discourses of Paul. So great has the literary influence of the Bible been that without a knowledge of it we should miss much of the charm and force in the best English prose of the past three centuries; together with the Book of Common Prayer (Edward VI) it has been the informing power of English prose style. We recognize it not only in countless direct quotations,

but in the very fiber of the sentences, the turn of the phrase. Notice, for example, the indebtedness to the Bible in the following sentence from Ruskin: "And mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things,—these may yet be here your riches; untormenting and divine; serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come."¹ Notice, furthermore, that not merely such phrases as "that which is to come" give the impression of Biblical influence; there is also the simple dignity of expression which is our peculiar inheritance from our English Bible.

¹ From *The Crown of Wild Olive*.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY AND PLAYS	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1558-1603	Elizabeth	George Gascoigne, 1525-1577	The Steele Glas	Acts and Monu- Chronicle ments Plutarch's Lives Palace of Pleas- ure Euphues Rosalind Voyages
1559	Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity	Thomas Sackville, 1536-1608	Gorboduc	
		John Foxe, 1517-1587		
		Raphael Holinshed, ?-1580		
		Thomas North, 1535-1601		
1577-80	Drake sails round the world	William Paynter, 1554-1593		
		John Lyly, 1553-1606	Songs, Plays	
		Thomas Lodge, 1558-1625	Songs	
		Richard Hakluyt, 1553-1616	Paradyse of Dainty Devises, 1576	
			Handefull of Pleasant De- lites, 1584	
			Sonnets	
1587	Execution of Mary Queen of Scots	Philip Sidney, 1554-1586		Arcadia
		EDMUND SPENSER, 1552-1599	Faerie Queen	

CHRONOLOGY — (Continued)

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY AND PLAYS	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1588	Spanish Armada defeated	Walter Raleigh, ?1552-1618 Richard Hooker, 1553-1600 George Chapman, ?1557- 1634 Samuel Daniel, 1562-1619 Michael Drayton, 1563-1631 George Peele, ?1558-1598 Robert Greene, 1560-1592 Christopher Marlowe, 1564- 1593 Thomas Kyd, end of 16th cent. Thomas Nash, end of 16th cent. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, 1564-1616 FRANCIS BACON, 1561-1626	Poems Translation of Homer Plays Poems Polyolbion Old Wives' Tale Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay Edward II The Spanish Tragedy Summer's Last Will { Hamlet Sonnets, Poems	History of the World Ecclesiastical Pol- ity
1603-1625	JAMES I			
1605	Gunpowder Plot			
1607	Settlement of Virginia			
1620	Landing of Pilgrim Fathers in New Eng- land			Essays BIBLE, Authorized Version, 1611

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

LITERATURE. SPENSER. A good life of Spenser is by Church, in the *English Men of Letters Series* (Macmillan). The most satisfactory edition of his works in one volume is the *Globe* (Macmillan).

Good selections from SIDNEY, RALEGH, DRAYTON, LYLY, and other writers of this period may be found in Ward's *English Poets*, 4 vols. (Macmillan), and Craik's *English Prose*, 5 vols. (Macmillan). *Century Readings* (Century) covers the ground well in a one-volume edition.

THE EARLY DRAMA. A good selection of old plays is Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, 2 vols. (Ginn). Marlowe's plays are published, with a good introduction by Symonds, in the *Mermaid Series* (Scribner); also in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton).

SHAKESPEARE. The fullest life is by Sidney Lee (Macmillan); a good shorter biography is that by Walter Raleigh (English Men of Letters Series). *The Facts about Shakespeare*, by Neilson and Thorndike, a supplementary volume to *The Tudor Shakespeare* (Macmillan), is a compact statement of the sources of Shakespeare biography and contains a good bibliography. A similarly useful volume is *A Life of Shakespeare*, by Oliphant Smeaton, *Everyman's Library* (Dutton).

The fullest edition of Shakespeare's works is the *Variorum*, by H. H. Furness (Lippincott); the notes contain a collection of the best criticism, textual and general; but so far only about half of the plays have been covered. Among the numerous other editions, one of the best is *The Tudor Shakespeare* (Macmillan). Hudson's revised edition (Ginn) and Rolfe's (American Book Co.) are also adapted to school use. An interesting reprint of the *First Folio Edition* has been edited by Porter and Clarke (Crowell). Good one-volume edi-

tions are the *Globe* (Macmillan) and the *Cambridge* (Houghton Mifflin). *Shakespeare's Principal Plays* (Century Co.) gives a good selection of twenty plays in one volume.

A good introduction to a study of Shakespeare criticism may be gained from the comments quoted in the *Variorum Edition*. Other helpful books are: Dowden's *Shakespeare: His Mind and Art* (Harper); Wendell's *William Shakespeare* (Scribner); Baker's *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist* (Macmillan); and Brander Matthews' *Shakespeare as a Playwright* (Scribner). The essay on Shakespeare by Emerson, in *Representative Men*, that by Lowell, in *Among My Books*, and Coleridge's *Notes and Lectures on the Plays of Shakespeare* (Bohn's Library) are invaluable.

BACON. The authoritative life of Bacon is *Francis Bacon and his Times*, 2 vols., by J. Spedding (Houghton Mifflin). The life by R. W. Church, in the *English Men of Letters Series* (Macmillan) is a good briefer account. See also Macaulay's "Essay" on Bacon. For Bacon's works a convenient edition is published on India paper by George Newnes. The ESSAYS alone may be had in numerous cheap editions.

KING JAMES BIBLE. Acquaintance with Moulton's *The Literary Study of the Bible* (Heath) adds greatly to the appreciation of the Bible as English literature.

SUGGESTED READINGS.

Spenser's FAERIE QUEEN should never be read as a task; it is therefore difficult to advise a specific amount. If it is enjoyed, it will probably prescribe its own limits; if it is not enjoyed, one canto is probably too much. The EPITHALAMION, the PROTHALAMION, and part of THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDAR (say, "February" and "October") are a good introduction to his other poems. The Selections in *Century Readings* or in Manly's *English Poetry* and *English Prose* serve for a first acquaintance with minor Elizabethan writers. For the drama before Shakespeare one should read a Morality Play, such as EVERYMAN; an early comedy, such as GAMMER GURTON'S NEE-

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DLE, GORBODUC; and at least two plays by the "University Men"—Peele's DAVID AND BETHSABE and Marlowe's EDWARD II are recommended. For Shakespeare, if the student's time is limited, he is advised not to read *all* the plays hastily, but to *study* several carefully (a fairly representative selection would include THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, AS YOU LIKE IT, THE TEMPEST, HENRY V, ROMEO AND JULIET, JULIUS CÆSAR, HAMLET, and MACBETH) and to read the rest when he can. Of course Shakespeare should be *re-read*, the sonnets as well as the plays. The same advice applies to Bacon's ESSAYS—they are to be "chewed and digested." A good beginning may be made by reading the essays on *Truth, Adversity, Superstition, Dispatch, Seeming Wise, Discourse, Riches, Youth and Age*, and *Studies*. For Bacon's other work the NEW ATLANTIS is perhaps the best point of departure. In reading the BIBLE as literature, the student will do well to begin by reading different types: the simple narrative, as in *Genesis XXIV* and in *Ruth*; the priestly narrative, as in *Genesis I*, the Deuteronomist style, as in *Deuteronomy V*; the primitive poetry, as in *Judges V*; the priestly poetry, as in *Psalms XXIV*; the Wisdom Books, as in *Proverbs*; the prophetic style, particularly in *Isaiah, Amos*, and *Revelation*; and the educated style, as seen in *Paul's Epistles*.

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. Creighton's *Age of Elizabeth* (Longmans) is an excellent short history of the period. The *Life of Raleigh*, by Stebbing (Clarendon Press), presents a good picture of a "typical" Elizabethan. Further references: Seccomb and Allen, *The Age of Shakespeare*, 2 vols. (Macmillan); Saintsbury, *A Short History of Elizabethan Literature* (Macmillan); Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* (Macmillan); and Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, 2 vols. (Houghton Mifflin). See also special chapters in the books recommended on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. Scott's *Kenilworth* and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* are novels dealing with the Elizabethan period. Swinburne and Schiller have both written plays with

Mary Stuart the central figure; and J. P. Peabody (Mrs. Marks) has written a play called *Marlowe*. Macaulay's *The Armada*, Tennyson's *The Revenge*, and Noyes's *Drake* are poems expressing the daring spirit of Elizabethan sailors.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Shakespeare, Bacon, and Raleigh not only were contemporaries of Ben Jonson, but actually wrote much of their work in the seventeenth century. The first part of the century, then, belongs much more with the preceding Age of Elizabeth than with the following Puritan Age. Nevertheless, it has characteristics of its own: in the drama after 1611 the dominant figure was not Shakespeare, but Jonson; under Jonson's lead men came to think of their plays as *literary productions*; the unity of impulse, as well as the buoyancy, of the early Elizabethans had gone; and, politically, a new, un-Elizabethan temper began to show itself almost immediately after the accession of James I in 1603.

This new political attitude was due largely to the rule of the Stuarts, which was as unwise as that of the Tudors had been sagacious, but it was due also to the important fact that during a century of unprecedented development men had grown to think for themselves and to resent, more than ever, despotic rule. Coupled with a wave of religious reform, the new temper gathered strength till in the time of Charles I it controlled the political situation and gave a new color to literature.

The spirit of reform over-reached itself, however.

With Charles II, in 1660, a reaction set in. Literature, moreover, not only felt the reaction and, running from restraint, fell into license, but it took a new turn as well: following the king, who attempted to copy the French monarch, the writers of the last part of the century began a rather servile imitation of the French revival of the Classics.

The seventeenth century, then, falls into three main periods: the Age of Ben Jonson (1610-1635); the Puritan Age (1635-1660); and the Age of Dryden (1660-1700).

THE AGE OF BEN JONSON (1610-1635)

During the first years of the seventeenth century the Elizabethan drama reached its height. It was at this time that the "wit-combats" at the Mermaid Tavern must have taken place; and more important than Shakespeare in these meetings, if of less note as a dramatist, was the figure of Ben Jonson—"firm-footed Ben." For fifteen years after Shakespeare's death he dominated the half-literary, half-convivial gatherings and passed sentence on contemporary plays. He was the first great "dictator" of English literature, as Samuel Johnson, a hundred and fifty years later, was the last. It is not so much for the merit of his works as for his influence on literature that Ben Jonson is remembered. He opposed the Romantic style of his contemporaries and, like the other Johnson, was a sturdy champion of the Classics.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637).

Jonson was born in Westminster. He was set in his youth to learn the trade of bricklaying, but he ran away

to fight the Spaniards in the Low Countries; and, coming back with a successful duel to his account, he appeared in London as actor and playwright. In his first play, *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), Shakespeare took one of the parts. During the next fifteen years Jonson produced many plays, excelling in such comedies as



BEN JONSON

Volpone, or the Fox (1605), *Epicæne, or the Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).

In these plays, full of amusing situations, Jonson gives a vivid picture of the coarse humor of his time.

His verse is sturdy and often skilful, and the prose talked by his characters is realistic,

but he is far surpassed by several of his contemporaries in both verse and the conception of characters. This artificiality in Jonson's characters, however, was intentionally adopted by him, for the purposes of satire; he liked to picture men as representing particular "humors," or exaggerated types. Jonson was a great scholar, and in his comedies as in his two tragedies, *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611), he followed strictly classical rules, thus condemning by practice, as well as by precept, the careless, Romantic

style of his fellow-playwrights, among them Shakespeare.

During the reign of James I, Jonson's masques,¹ elaborate, half-musical plays, found great favor at court. He was made poet-laureate, was the unquestioned "ar-biter of letters" among literary men, and for a while enjoyed great popularity. His life, however, was full of ups and downs. Once he barely escaped hanging for killing an actor in a duel; at another time he went to prison for passages in *Eastward Ho!* which displeased the king; and in spite of his fame and royal favor, he died rather poorly off. He was buried with great honor in Westminster Abbey, with the simple inscription "O rare Ben Johnson" ² on his tomb.

The variety and strength of Jonson's genius and his undoubted authority among the writers of his day is what gives him preëminence. Of not less literary value than his plays are his volume of prose essays, *Timber*, or *Discoveries made upon Men and Matter*, and his conversations recorded by William Drummond of Hawthornden. Finally, the world remembers best, perhaps, such songs as "Drink to me only with thine eyes."

Versatile, in many ways an Elizabethan, Jonson reveals nevertheless a new age. In the first place, he looked upon his plays as literature quite as much as pieces for acting. Further, he strove to set up definite literary standards, and largely succeeded in doing so. Again, in the character of his plays, as in the *finesse* of his lyrics, he shows

¹ For a discussion of the Masque, see p. 184.

² Though the name is spelled with an "h" in the Westminster inscription, it is usually spelled without—"Jonson."



FRANCIS BEAUMONT

the defect of maturity; the youthful freshness of Elizabethan England is gone; "the flower is over-blown." This *decadence*, as it has been called, is still more marked in his later contemporaries. More plays were being written than in Shakespeare's days, and most of them were technically more correct, but they had, generally

speaking, two serious defects: they were merely clever, rather than genuine; and they were often coarse for the sake of coarseness. Still, the names of such able playwrights as Dekker, Beaumont, Fletcher, Webster, Middleton, Heywood, Massinger, Chapman, Ford, and Shirley, testify to the abundance of good plays in Jonson's time. Here we shall have space to consider only a few.

THOMAS DEKKER (?1570-?1640) shows a freshness and genuine gaiety that has justly earned him the title of "the last of the Elizabethans."¹ His *Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600) and *Old Fortunatus* (1600) are full of true Shakespearean fun.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT (1584-1616) is usually asso-

¹ A name sometimes given to Shirley, because he was the last great dramatist born in Elizabeth's reign.

ciated with JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625), though their collaboration was probably only in a few plays. They were most successful in a mixture of comedy and tragedy, abhorrent to Ben Jonson. Among their best plays may be noted *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster*, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The last of these is one of the few old plays, outside of Shakespeare's, that are still "good acting." Though much of the work of Beaumont and Fletcher shows cleverness rather than strength, *The Maid's Tragedy* reveals an intensity of passion that raises it above most of the plays of Jonson's time. At its best it produces such vivid lines as these:

I am not she; nor bear I in this breast
So much cold spirit to be called a woman:
I am a tiger; I am anything
That knows not pity. Stir not: if thou dost,
I'll take thee unprepared, thy fears upon thee,
That make thy sins look double, and so send thee,
(By my revenge, I will!) to look those torments
Prepared for such black souls.

Fletcher, more of a professional playwright than Beaumont, probably supplied most of the invention and stagecraft; but Beaumont was the better poet.

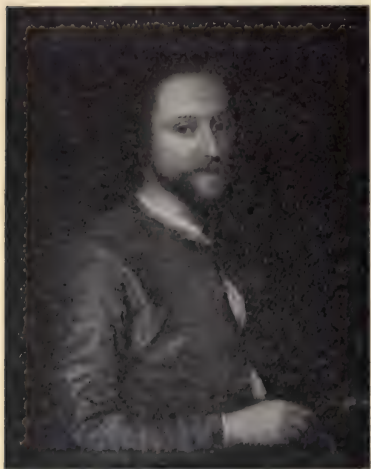
THOMAS MIDDLETON (1570-1627) wrote verse that ranks with the best of his time, but his plays are sensational and coarse. One of his best dramas is *The Changeling*.

THOMAS HEYWOOD (dates unknown) was one of the most prolific writers of his day; he had a hand, he says, in over two hundred plays. Perhaps the best is *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. It has the further interest of

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being one of the first plays of "domestic drama," a type very popular to-day.

JOHN FORD (1586-?1640), the author of *The Broken Heart*, wrote with a simplicity and severity more classic than Elizabethan. Most of his plays, however, are



JOHN FLETCHER

marred by unnatural and horrible (rather than tragic) scenes.

JOHN WEBSTER (dates unknown) ranks, in his power of versification and his ability to conceive dramatic situations, close to Shakespeare; but he served too wholly the popular taste for "tragedies of blood." The result was coarse plays, with the characters drowned in a welter of

blood. His best work is *The Duchess of Malfi*, an Italian story of intrigue and cruelty. In one notable scene he produces the effect of tremendous emotion by simple language, instead of by bombast, in a way that reminds us of a similar effect in the great scenes of *Macbeth*¹ and *Lear*. Ferdinand, after unspeakable cruelties to his sister, the Duchess, is shown her dead body; yet, overcome by sorrow and remorse, he does not "tear a passion to tatters," but says simply:

¹ See p. 140.

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

The dramatists that followed Shakespeare, in fact, were well up in their craft—in the making of plots, in the setting of dramatic situations, and in the skilful use of such devices as contrast and suspense. But they had little more; they came less and less to “hold the mirror up to nature”; they seem to have forgotten that man was controlled by more than whims, situations, and conflicting passions, that he was a moral being, with ideals. By 1642, when the Puritans closed the theaters, comedy was degraded into cleverness and tragedy into violence; and in either case into coarseness.

THE LYRIC POETS.

The Elizabethan skill at turning verses carried well into the seventeenth century. Though the lyrics of Jonson's time lacked the freshness and youth of the sixteenth century songs, they were executed by more finished artists. Besides the dramatists, nearly all of whom, but especially Jonson, Heywood, and Dekker, wrote excellent lyrics, there was a long line of accomplished poets. With the possible exception of Herrick, however, it is impossible to select one representative of them all; for, instead of a



ROBERT HERRICK

A facsimile of the frontispiece of the first edition of Herrick's Works

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common impulse, as in Elizabethan days, which gave men the common theme of love, we find a diversity of interest, and the attention is fixed more on the form than on the thought. Roughly speaking, however, the poetry of the period may be divided into: *Pastoral*, represented by ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674); *Cavalier*, represented by RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658); and *Religious*, represented by GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633).¹ Of these Herrick was the ablest — a “phrase-maker,” the English Horace. Such prettily turned verses as

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying,

and

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes,

abound in Herrick's *Hesperides*. A clergyman, he wrote some religious verse (*Noble Numbers*), but it is usually inferior to his secular poetry. Graceful, rather than thoughtful or passionate, his verse is best suited to trivial themes: “Delight in Disorder”; “The Bracelet”; “The Primrose.” Of the many seventeenth century poets who sought “perfection in trifles” he showed the greatest skill.

The Cavalier verse, as its name implies, was associated with the reckless chivalry of the followers of King Charles — bold riders and gay lovers. A good example is Lovelace's *To Lucasta, Going to the wars*:

¹ Any one wishing to understand the seventeenth century lyrics at all fully should of course not confine himself to these three. Donne, Quarles, Crashaw, Vaughan, Suckling, Carew, and Waller are the chief poets whom space forces us to slight here.

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

George Herbert, the pious soul who counted himself and his work "less than the least of God's mercies," wrote in his little parish of Bemerton religious verses on which posterity has set a higher value than their author did. His poetry is full of "the beauty of holiness"—a favorite expression of his; lines like the following are typical:

Only a sweete and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;—

and

I got me flowers to straw Thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But Thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee.

Occasionally, however, he strikes a more stirring note:

Chase brave employment with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not, for all may have,
If they dare choose, a glorious life or grave.

THE PURITAN AGE (1635-1660).

The chief history of the middle of the seventeenth century centers in Puritanism. Starting back in the sixteenth century as a protest in favor of purity, it took its impetus from the Reformation. The Reformation of Henry VIII, to be sure, had been largely political; and the Protestantism of Elizabeth had been dictated more by policy than by piety. Still, there gradually grew up a spirit of religious enthusiasm, which reached its height in the days of Cromwell and his "God-fearing" army. The Renaissance had turned men's minds to this world; the Puritan Reformation turned them beyond this world, to the world to come. As the Elizabethan felt the joy of living, so the Puritan felt the presence of death. Few contrasts could be stronger. An old man, the Elizabethan Raleigh put to sea in his fine clothes, his cabin decorated with beautiful pictures. The Puritan Milton in his old age sat, gray-suited, at his cottage door and meditated verses on Adam's expulsion from Paradise.

For an understanding of this turn in the English temper we must realize the hold which the doctrines of John Calvin took on the English mind. Calvinism, roughly, was the belief that, though all men were born in sin, God had in his infinite mercy *elected* a few for salvation. A man never knew whether he belonged to the elect or to the outcast; the chances were against him, for the elect were few; but it behooved him to watch and pray lest he lose what little chance he had. Though this doctrine had its greatest adherence in Scotland, among the followers of John Knox, its influence extended beyond sectarian

lines. Even many of those who stoutly opposed it took on much of its somber outlook on life. And though Puritans were never in the majority in England, for a while they were in control. As Macaulay puts it, "They prostrated themselves in the dust before their Maker, but they put their foot on the neck of their king."

For along with the rebellion against the tyranny of the English Church came a great civil rebellion against the tyranny of the Stuarts. The issue between the king and Parliament, which began as soon as the Stuart kings, without wisdom or money, attempted to continue the despotism of the Tudors, had reached a critical condition as early as 1629. For eleven years Charles contrived to rule without Parliament; but the opposition to his methods had grown so strong by 1640 that, when he was forced to call a parliament, to get funds to fight the Scots, he received, not funds, but open defiance.

The religious question came to a head at the same time. Different sects, especially the Scottish Presbyterians, more and more opposed the Established Church—the church of the king. At first Puritans were found in any denomination, but gradually they came to be associated with dissenting sects; as Milton put it, they were "church-outed by the prelates." Archbishop Laud, like his sovereign, met opposition with opposition; a crisis was reached; and in 1642 the king and Church went to war with Parliament and the Puritans.

Both efforts failed in themselves; that is, the Presbyterian Puritans turned out to be as dogmatic as the church they condemned; Cromwell's military rule, if more just than the rule of Charles, was quite as tyrannical;

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and a violent reaction, in 1660, brought about the corrupt days of Charles II. Nevertheless, the struggle prepared the way for later, more permanent reforms: the successful Revolution of 1688 and the growing religious toleration of the following century. Chiefly, the nation was completely changed; "Merrie England" was forever a thing of the past; the mark of Puritanism is visible even to-day.

Puritanism had a strangling effect on literature. For besides closing the theaters, it taught men to distrust music and art. The result was that for twenty years literature was largely confined to a great body of controversial pamphlets or to what was written in seclusion by those who had escaped the "furie of Protestantism." Even Milton, the great Puritan poet, was only a "Puritan by the accident of his times"; he must not be narrowly confined, in literature, to the limits of a narrow age.

In fact, to understand Milton's position it must be clearly kept in mind that Puritanism was *not a sect*. His eagerness to serve the cause of civil liberty forced him to take sides with the Presbyterians; "he fought their perilous battle," says Macaulay, "but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph." Neither the temporary success of his side nor the military despotism that Cromwell was forced to set up squared with Milton's ideas of freedom. His cause failed even in its success; but it failed doubly, to his mind, when in 1660 a Stuart was restored to the throne. In his poetry, moreover, Milton wrote, like an Elizabethan, "not for an age, but for all time."



Gul. Fagthorne ad Pirum

Delin et sculpsit.

Geannio Wiltoni Effigies. Etat: 62.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674).

Life. Milton's whole life centers in two things: what he himself called "a vehement love of the beautiful" and a no less vehement love of liberty. From early youth he looked upon himself as a "dedicated spirit,"

Born to promote all truth,
All righteous things.

During the first period of his literary activity, from 1629 to 1639, he gave himself up to poetry, to the service of the beautiful; during the second period, from 1639 to 1660, he left the service of beauty for that of liberty; and during the third, 1660 to 1674, he returned to poetry. The broad sweep of his interests looks backward to the Elizabethan poets and forward to the French Revolution.

John Milton was born on December 8, 1608, in a house in Bread Street, London. His father, of the same name, was a well-to-do *scrivener*¹ and, in his leisure hours, a skilful musician. The boy received a good training, for besides his education at St. Paul's School, he had private lessons. From the first, he says, he was "serious to learn and know"; "from the twelfth year of my life," he tells us in his *Defensio Secunda*, "I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight." In 1625 he entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he remained for seven years. While at the university Milton was called the "Lady of Christ's," not merely on account of his youthful beauty, but also on account of the purity of his character. "Only this my mind gave me," he later wrote of his youth, "that every free and gentle spirit,

¹ A scrivener was employed to draw up deeds, wills, and contracts.

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without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the gilt spur or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder to stir him up both by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect the weakness of any attempted chastity."

While he was still at the university, Milton began to write poetry. Most of his first efforts were in Latin, but among his early attempts in English verse the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629) showed him a poet of great promise. Soon after followed the famous sonnet *On Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three* and his *Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare*.

In 1632 Milton's father retired, with a competence, to live at Horton, about twenty miles west of London; and there his son lived with him for five years, studying and writing the best of his so-called "Minor Poems": *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (1632); *Arcades* (1633); *Comus* (1634); and *Lycidas* (1637). These poems, written while Ben Jonson was still alive, are full of the best Elizabethan inheritances; for the most part, they reveal a studious author, a lover of seclusion, a man dedicated singly to poetry. Here and there, however, there are important signs of a new calling. In *Lycidas*, for example, Milton turns for a moment from his theme to condemn outspokenly the greed and folly of the Church, while the poem closes with the prophecy:

To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

The public life soon to follow was indeed different from the quiet days at Horton.

These were only forebodings, however, and Milton, with no definite call to service, went abroad in 1638, to France and Italy. But a year later, when he heard of the war between the Scots and Charles I, he gave up a projected journey to Greece and returned to England; "for I considered it base," he said, "that, while my countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be traveling abroad at ease for intellectual culture." Here was the departure, in Milton's mind: to give up poetry and study and to work for "righteous things"—to "scorn delights and live laborious days."

On returning to England Milton had at first nothing specific to do. We find him starting a small school in London and getting married, in 1643, to Mary Powell. His wife left him after a month, and he proceeded during the next two years to write four treatises on *Divorce*. Later he was reconciled to her, but it is doubtful whether they were happy; it is unlikely that she found comfort in his austere Puritan doctrine of marriage: "He for God only, she for God in him." She bore him three daughters and died in 1653. He married again in 1656, Katharine Woodcock, but she too died after fifteen months; and in 1663 he married yet a third time, Elizabeth Minshull.

More important than the treatises on divorce were other pamphlets written by Milton between 1641 and 1645: five on *Church Government*; one on *Education*; and the *Areopagitica*; a *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. It was by these pamphlets that Milton became known. Politically, he had counted for a private citizen, a poet of distinction, but not of *political value*.

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Now, however, the power of his pen was recognized, and the high position he took in defense of Truth commended him to the Puritan leaders. In 1649, soon after he had published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in justification of the execution of the King, he was appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues. His duties were the preparation of addresses, the writing of letters to foreign states, and the defense of the Commonwealth. And though he filled his position with zeal,—wrote himself blind, in fact,—it must be realized that the military despotism which he served was far from his ideal of government; his choice lay, however, as Macaulay says, “not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts.” In defense of the Commonwealth he wrote several pamphlets, chief among them the *Eikonoklastes*¹ (1649); *The Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* (1651); and the *Defensio Secunda* (1654).

Though Milton was stricken with blindness in 1652, he retained his position till 1660 and continued to dictate letters and pamphlets. Poetry, the chosen calling of his youth, had been largely put aside, but during the years of public service he wrote most of his sonnets, and towards the end began his great work, *Paradise Lost*.

For the first six months after the Restoration of Charles II, the life of the man who had served Cromwell so eagerly was in danger. Milton was arrested and fined heavily, but was released. Poor and shut out from holding office, he lived quietly in London. It was

¹ That is, “image-breaker.” Written in reply to the *Eikon Basilike* (“image of the King”), a book picturing Charles as a martyr.

now that he turned to the occupation of his youth — poetry. Dictating to his daughters and to a friend, Thomas Ellwood, he finished *Paradise Lost* and published it in 1667. He had long thought of making a great poem on King Arthur — as Spenser had done before him and as Tennyson did long after; — but the stern experience of his public years had burned deep into his soul: he was better fitted to write the story of man's sin and fall; he had had almost literal experience of the expulsion from Paradise. Ellwood, when the great epic was finished, asked Milton if he had nothing to say of "Paradise Found." The result was *Paradise Re-*



MILTON'S COTTAGE, CHALFONT ST. GILES

gained (1671); but Milton had fought for a losing cause, and sang with less power of man's redemption than of his fall. More powerful is his last great poem, *Samson Agonistes* (1671), in dramatic form. His genius was well suited to the story of Samson's pride and weakness, and to the chastening moral at the end. This moral, indeed, expresses the conclusion of Milton's own life. He had fought for a good cause and had failed, but he turned to die with "true experience from this great event" — in "calm of mind, all passion spent." Among the many prose works which he wrote during his last years, none is more important than a Latin treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, revealing his simple faith in the In-

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ner Spirit. He died November 8, 1674, "with so little pain that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room."

At once too visionary and too broad-minded to be successful in a practical way, Milton stood out from the petty quarrels of sects and the petty literature of hired pamphleteers and bigoted poets. Alone in a whole century, he showed that a Puritan might be a great artist; and he came nearer than any other English poet to combining the two great ideals of his life—Beauty and Truth.

Works. If Spenser is "the poet's poet" and Browning "the scholar's poet," Milton may be termed "the prophet's poet." For though the felicity of his verse appeals strongly to poets and though his writings require scholarly study, he is especially an "aider to those who would live in the spirit"; a sort of preparation, an initiation, is necessary if we are to feel the power of his "high seriousness." Milton himself liked to refer, in his poetry, to the celestial harmony, the music of the spheres, which "no gross ear can hear"; and Charles Lamb said of him: "Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts and purged ears."

THE MINOR POEMS. Among Milton's so-called "Minor Poems" the best are *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. The first two of these need little explanation. *L'Allegro*, the happy man, enjoys such country pleasures as we should imagine familiar to Milton in his life at Horton—a walk in the early morning,

Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn,

seeing the plowman, milkmaid, and mower at their work, glimpsing "towers and battlements" above the "tufted trees," joining in country dance at an "upland hamlet," with tales afterwards over "the spicy nut brown ale," or perhaps an evening in town at the "well-trod stage,"

If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

Il Penseroso, the thoughtful man, seeks rather the midnight landscapes, or, if it be day, some "close covert," hidden from day's garish eye; but he prefers most of all to walk the "studious cloisters" and hear the "pealing organ," or to study in "some high lonely tower," reading Plato, and Greek Tragedy, and "the story of Cambuscan bold." But it is not chiefly the occupations of the two men that interest us; it is rather the pleasant verses, with here and there, especially in *Il Penseroso*, something of the majesty of Milton's later poetry.

Comus, a masque, was presented at Ludlow Castle in honor of the Earl of Bridgewater, lately appointed Lord President of Wales. The masque, developed by Jonson, was an elaborate court play. Originally a masked dance, it took on literary elements till in Jonson's time the spoken parts became an important feature. Among its many contrasts to the professional play should be noted that it was acted by private persons, usually members of the family in whose honor it was given; that it was marked by music and dancing; that both scenery and cos-



LUDLOW CASTLE. THE HALL IN WHICH "COMUS" WAS PRESENTED

tume were elaborate; that it was usually thrown into a pastoral setting; and that, after Jonson, it regularly had a moral. *Comus* fulfils all these conditions. Its importance to us, however, lies in the excellence of the verse, which has long survived the music of Henry Lawes and the fame of the Earl of Bridgewater, and in the Miltonic theme — the power of purity. In *Comus*, too, there are here and there signs of that "loftier strain" Milton was destined later to sing.

Lycidas was written in memory of his friend Edward King, drowned in crossing the Irish seas. With absolute mastery over his verse, Milton rimes at random, rather than according to a regular scheme, with perfect result.

This lament is thrown into pastoral form, as is *Comus*, but the earnestness and enthusiasm of the poet constantly rise above the pretty, pastoral conventions, especially when he speaks of Lycidas in heaven:

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive¹ nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.

PROSE. *Lycidas* was the last great poem that Milton wrote till he turned, in old age, to his greatest work, *Paradise Lost*. For the next twenty years or so his chief labors were in the controversial field, either in support of the Commonwealth or in exposition of his ideas of Liberty and Truth. Of all his pamphlets the *Areopagitica*, an argument for the freedom of the press, contains his best prose. The whole argument rests on the belief that Truth can take care of itself, a belief eloquently set forth.

And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let

¹ Inexpressible.

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her and Falsehood grapple; Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?

Again:

He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for not without dust and heat.

What is often considered the finest passage in all Milton's prose occurs in this book:

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

SONNETS. The sonnets written during this period of prose give ample evidence that Milton had put poetry aside only because his time was occupied with what seemed weightier matters; there was no abatement of genius. He warns Cromwell, "our chief of men," that

Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war;

he bursts out in indignation at the slaughter of Protestants in Piedmont:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;

or, reflecting on his blindness, he says:

God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.



MILTON DICTATING TO HIS DAUGHTERS

From the painting by M. Munkácsy, in the New York Public Library

PARADISE LOST. Of Milton's longer poems *Paradise Lost* is incontestably the best. It is not only the greatest of his works, but as an epic it is unapproached in the English language; it stands with the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and the *Divine Comedy*. Its excellence lies in the mag-

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nificent conceptions and descriptions of heaven and hell and in the "mighty harmonies" of its blank verse. But these things cannot be explained; they can only be illustrated; and to be fully understood, they must be *felt* by reading the poem till the vastness of the thought and the surge of the lines run in the head, till we realize the full truth of Wordsworth's lines on Milton —

Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea.

From the first lines, when Milton sets forth his purpose — to sing "of man's first disobedience," to

assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men —,

the reader moves in the vast worlds of heaven and hell, among mighty Titanic forms; and as the verse proceeds in its rolling periods he feels increasingly the gigantic scale of the whole conception. The figure of Satan, particularly, is tremendously drawn. No small and crafty devil this, but fallen deity, with

courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome;

"chained on the burning lake," he

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast

Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.¹

With spear, to which the tallest pine "were but a wand,"
he had dared to oppose God's power

In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne.

Against such a gigantic figure man would have no chance
were it not for the still more powerful figure of God.
At the beginning of the poem we are told that after Sa-
tan's war in Heaven,

Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Yet God, for man's good, allowed Satan the temporary
victory; at the end of the poem we find the flaming sword
of God's angel driving Adam and Eve out of Paradise.
Looking back, they beheld the gate

With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms;
and so, turning sadly,

Hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

The first book, in which Milton describes Satan and

¹ The Atlantic was supposed by the ancients to flow in a circle
about the earth; and Milton here, as elsewhere, follows the classical
traditions.

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his palace, Pandemonium, is the best; Satan is the great figure of the poem. Other books are tedious in places; it has been pointed out that Eve is little more than an English housewife, solicitous about the food of visiting angels. Still, throughout the twelve books the large scale of the first is, in the main, sustained; and magnificent passages abound, especially in the second book and at the end of the whole poem. Again and again Milton achieves a tremendous effect by the skilful assembling of proper names — words that, besides their ringing sound, call to the imagination mighty deeds of old. Such a passage is the description of Satan's rebel host:

For never, since created man,
Met such embodied force, as named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes — though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

If these names mean what they should to us, we hear, as we read the lines, "the drums and tramlings" of all time.

Of not less importance than the language, in produc-

ing this martial effect, is the movement of the verse. Nowhere can the secret of good blank verse be so well perceived as in Milton. It will be seen, if the above passage is carefully read, that the whole makes a sort of stanza, no line of which can be omitted without destroying the beauty of the passage. It is these periods — what may be called variable stanzas — that are the chief glory of Miltonic blank verse. As other lines are read, it will be observed how each period, or group, moves like a live thing, now rapidly, now slowly, sometimes with apparent confusion, never monotonously, but coming round at the end of each period to the far-seen conclusion, a regular iambic line. Good blank verse, we come to realize as we read Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Tennyson, is more than iambic pentameter, and more than a collection of individual lines. Capable of infinite variations, it is at once the most difficult and, when successfully written, the most wonderful of English meters.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688).

Milton was not only a Puritan, but carried with him the literary tradition of the Elizabethan Age. Bunyan, in contrast, was entirely a product of the Puritan Age. A poor tinker in a country village, he knew no literature but his Bible; and when he was "converted" and began to write, he spoke in the simple language that he knew. The intensity of his spiritual struggle and the simple vigor of his great book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, are the two important points for us to notice. To understand Bunyan and his book, we must realize the grip which religion had on earnest men in the seventeenth century; we must

recall the fact that the one concern of this life was the salvation of the individual soul, that men went into battle singing hymns, that Cromwell himself wept "hysterical tears"; then we shall begin to understand the torment and the ecstasy of the Puritan in the throes of conversion.

Life. John Bunyan, born in the hamlet of Elstow, near Bedford, was the son of a tinker. Not much is known of his youth except that he followed his father's trade and was, by his own account, rather a leader in the village games. Harmless as these games — tipcat and dancing — seem to us, they were condemned by the severe Puritans, especially as Sunday pastimes. About the time of Bunyan's marriage, 1648, he began to have searchings of heart; a voice from heaven asked him whether "he would leave his sins and go to heaven, or keep his sins and go to hell." For upwards of seven years, he tells us, he went through terrible visions, yearnings, and depressions. Sometimes he felt the devil pulling at his back as he tried to pray; he seemed to himself "more loathsome than a toad," yet he felt love to Christ "hot as fire." Gradually, however, he fought his way through to spiritual calm. He says that he managed to give up swearing, though it is hard to believe that he ever offended greatly;¹ reluctantly but successfully he renounced what he considered worldly pleasures, among them dancing and bell-ringing; in 1653 he was publicly

¹ It should be realized that swearing was not generally condemned till Puritan times, and that what Bunyan gave up was using the ordinary language of a Royalist — perhaps no more blasphemous than "Mon Dieu" or "Lieber Gott" in modern French and German.



JOHN BUNYAN

A reduced facsimile of a drawing (made with pencil upon vellum) by Robert White, now in the British Museum. It was designed as copy for the engraving that forms the frontispiece to the third edition of "The Pilgrim's Progress," published in 1679, and is probably the earliest portrait of Bunyan

baptized in the River Ouse, and two years later he moved to Bedford and was made a deacon. Almost immediately he became famous as a preacher; he says he felt "as if an angel of God had stood at my back." Later, when he preached in London and Charles II wondered how the learned Dr. Owen could "sit and listen to an illiterate tinker,"

Owen answered, "I would gladly give up all my learning if I could preach like that tinker."

At the Restoration, in 1660, Bunyan came under the law against non-conformist preachers, was arrested, and, since he would not promise to stop preaching, was imprisoned for twelve years. The Declaration of Indulgence (1672) made him a

free man, but the Test Act (1673) brought him to jail again. After six months, however, the intervention of Owen and Bishop Barlow secured his release. From then till his death he labored unceasingly in good works and eloquent preaching to his simple congregation in Bedford.

Works. Bunyan began writing in 1656 and from then till his death poured out a great quantity of controversial pamphlets, sermons, and religious allegories. Of these the two most important are: *Grace Abounding*



THE MARKET CROSS, ELSTOW, WHERE STAKES, WON OR LOST AT "TIP-CAT," WERE PAID

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(1666), which tells the story of his conversion; and *The Pilgrim's Progress, Part the First* (1678). The latter of these has not only been familiar for over two centuries to all sorts of English readers, but it has been translated into over seventy-five languages and dialects and has taken its place among the half-dozen greatest books in the English language. This preëminence is due largely to the reality and sincerity of the story. Bunyan did not have to invent; the terrible visions of his conversion were like real experiences to him: he himself had borne the burden of Christian, had encountered the beast Apollyon, had been deserted in the Slough of Despond, had met in Vanity Fair "vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures" and yet had been able, like Milton's "true warfaring Christian," to "abstain and distinguish and prefer that which is truly better," had faced in Sir John Keeling just such a judge as Lord Hategood, and had won his way to spiritual rest. Like the substance of the book, moreover, the style is wonderfully vivid and sincere—the plain, Saxon speech of the men he knew, with the added dignity and beauty of the English he had learned from his King James Bible. It is this simple, powerful English of Bunyan's which still holds readers when the message of the book has lost something of the terrible import that it bore to the struggling Puritan.

OTHER WRITERS OF THE PURITAN AGE.

Among the other writers who flourished in this age of prose should be noted JEREMY TAYLOR (1613-1667) and ISAAC WALTON (1593-1683). Taylor was an An-

glican divine, one of a large class who, while adhering to the doctrines of the Church of England, were much influenced by the great movement for piety and purity going on about them. His greatest works are *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651), two books often printed as one, written in rich, poetic prose. Taylor, whom Emerson called "the Shakespeare of divines," wrote prose, one feels, only because of the accident of his times. The following quotation shows well his main theme — preparation for death and life in the next world — and gives some idea of his imaginative manner of expression — an imagination which in other times must have found vent in poetry:

"We taste the grave and



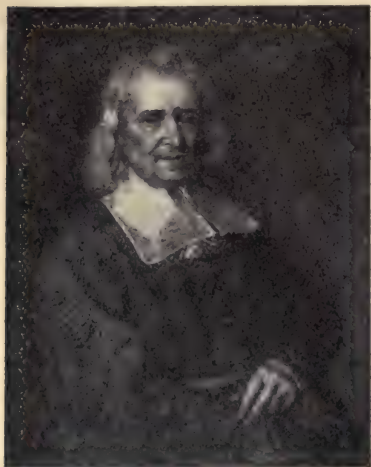
JEREMY TAYLOR

the solemnities of our own funerals, first in those parts that ministered to vice, and next in them that served for ornament; and in a short time even they that served for necessity become useless, and entangled like the wheels of a broken clock. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap and slept in his outer chambers."

Walton represents another class, those who, wisely for them, shunned London and the political unrest. Walton

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had always been fond of fishing, and when civil war broke out in 1642 he closed his shop in London and betook



ISAAC WALTON

himself to quiet country streams. *The Compleat Angler* (1653) was the result, a book that breathes the gentleness and quiet philosophy of the contemplative fisherman. Less well known are his *Lives*, chiefly of English divines, among them George Herbert, but these writings, like *The Compleat Angler*, reveal the sweet content of a man who loved the

past and his own out-of-doors — a quiet note in pleasant contrast to the discordant din of sects and schisms.

THE AGE OF DRYDEN (1660-1700).

With the Restoration there was a violent reaction against Puritanism. In their zeal the Puritans had carried virtue to excess; it had too often been pretense. In the reaction against this sham virtue many men of Dryden's time pretended a depravity which they did not possess. It must be conceded, however, that, just as the Puritans often lived up to their professions of virtue, the gallants of the Restoration often lived down to their professions of vice. The age, generally speaking, was

one of low standards intellectually and morally. The example was set by a profligate and careless king, and literature, especially the restored drama, sank to a depravity not elsewhere seen in English history. It is significant that Dryden, who knew the better, nearly always chose the worse: he wrote down to the popular taste and so helped to lower it, instead of chastening it gradually to a higher level. And what is true of Dryden is substantially true of the age.

The influence of France was very marked during the Age of Dryden. The king, in the first place, soon lost the prestige that Cromwell had won for England; from France he took, as Macaulay puts it, "her degrading insults and her more degrading gold." In addition, he took his manners from the polished court of Louis XIV. Writers, similarly, took their literary manners from the French; and literature in this age began to reflect French care in regard to polish and form. Thus began the so-called classic movement, which dominated English literature for a century. Classicism, however, was as unnatural to the English as it was natural to the French, with the result that in England there was a great deal of affectation and imitation.

The French influence, however, had one saving grace: it helped to produce English prose style. The sonorous Latinate prose of the English Prayer Book was being written by such men as Milton and Jeremy Taylor while Dryden was a young man; and the simple straightforward English of the King James Bible was the natural expression of Puritan writers like Bunyan. In Dryden's prose is preserved the best of these two great in-

heritances, and there is added a compactness and arrangement — in short, a sense of form — which made English prose into a new thing. This is the great contribution of Dryden's Age.

It must not be imagined, of course, that Puritanism was dead. Its influence among English-speaking people is not dead yet; and in the Restoration period it was very active indeed. We have only to recall that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was written during this time. In other fields, too, there were many minor writers of excellence: Evelyn and Pepys, the diarists; Locke and Hobbes, the philosophers; and Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, the great satire on Puritanism. Only one figure, however,— that of Dryden — stands out at all eminently. If Dryden served only as an introduction to the eighteenth century, a sort of bridge between Milton and Pope, it would be important to study him; but he did far more: he made English prose.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700).

Life. Dryden was born in August, 1631, at Aldwinkle All Saints, a little village in Northamptonshire. He came of a good family and received a good education at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. Dryden developed slowly, however: he did not enter the university till he was nineteen; he did not come into literary prominence till he was well past thirty; and his greatest work was written after he was fifty.

Soon after the Restoration, Dryden began to write plays, and though he believed in the blank verse style of Shakespeare, he catered to the popular taste for the



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JOHN DRYDEN

From a painting by Sir G. Kneller

heroic couplet. Admiring Milton, he had the effrontery to base an opera, the *State of Innocence* (1669) on *Paradise Lost*. He is said to have asked Milton for permission to turn the verse into rime; whereat Milton replied, "Ay, tag my verses if you will."¹ Far worse, he followed the popular demand for immorality. Few of his plays² are worthy of notice. While he was writing worthless plays, however, he was turning out prose prefaces that were destined to affect English style permanently. His purpose, to make his writing clear and compact, is well illustrated in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1667).

Dryden achieved great popularity with his rimed couplets and in 1670 was made Poet Laureate. His real power as a poet lay, not in drama, but in satire. In 1681 he published his *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which he satirized Shaftesbury for championing the claims of the Duke of Monmouth as heir to the throne. The poem found both popular and royal favor; Dryden was at the top of his fame. Another satire was *MacFlecknoe* (1682), directed against a poet named Shadwell and said to have been the model for Pope's *Dunciad*. Shadwell and the poem have been forgotten, but the lines,

The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense,

are immortal.

¹ It should be remembered that Milton in his preface to *Paradise Lost* said that rime was "no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse,—but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter."

² *All for Love*, *Don Sebastian*, and *The Conquest of Granada* are perhaps the best.

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In his old age Dryden continued to write actively. *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), in which he attempted to justify his change to the Romanist faith, shut him out from favor just at a time when England was turning resolutely Protestant. Dryden, however, in spite



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DRYDEN'S BIRTHPLACE, ALDWINKLE ALL SAINTS

of a life of catering to popular taste, stood his ground sturdily and remained a Romanist. Among his last important works are a translation of Virgil (1697) and his second Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, usually called *Alexander's Feast* (1697).

In the heyday of his fame Dryden was something of a literary dictator, but he took on more of this character in his old age. Then, in spite of adversity, political and religious, he was looked up to by the younger writers. The French fashion in literature was no longer a new thing; and Dryden, instead of an innovator, was

counted the acknowledged champion of the established order. Our last picture of him is at Will's Coffee-House, by the fire in winter, at the window in summer, making or marring by his judgments the fame of youthful authors. Here Swift was told that he would never be a poet, and here Pope, a boy of twelve, saw the great man whose skill in satiric verse he was to equal, if not surpass.

Works. In discussing Dryden's writings, we must notice especially two points: his development of the heroic couplet and his prose style. The heroic couplet should be distinguished from heroic¹ verse in couplets. The latter may be found in poets as diverse as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Keats. The heroic couplet, which became popular in Dryden's hands, was a much more formal thing: the sense is rarely "run on" outside of the couplet; the second verse of each couplet usually amplifies or contrasts with the first; and each line is usually divided into two halves, in sense, as well as in meter. This precise form was dull enough in most hands, but in those of Dryden and Pope it was wonderfully adapted to their trenchant phrases. The following lines from *MacFlecknoe* are an excellent example of Dryden's use of the heroic couplet:

All human things are subject to decay,
And when Fate summons, Monarchs must obey.

Not adapted to dramatic, epic, or lyric verse, the "closed" couplet has been rarely used to express great emotions; but it was the best possible vehicle for the

¹ That is, iambic pentameter. See pp. 284, 428.

satire of Dryden and Pope — the form of verse, in Dryden's own words,

Fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

For this Age of Dryden, like the Age of Pope, was one of prose.

To give some idea of Dryden's prose style and how it differs from all that precedes it is difficult without extensive quotation. One should read several pages of Bacon or Milton and then turn directly to Dryden. The difference is at once obvious. The structure of Milton's prose is more Latin than English and might have been made any time during the sixteen centuries before Milton. Dryden, in contrast, seems almost as modern as Thackeray, and quite as modern as Burke. A few sentences from the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* may give at least a hint of what is meant :

To begin then with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously but luckily:¹ when he describes anything you more than see it, you feel it too.

It does insufficient justice to Dryden, however, to speak only of his style. He was the ablest critic of his time, a man whose pithy comments on literature rank beside Bacon's vivid sentences on life. So, of Jonson he says: "One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it;"—again: "He invades au-

¹ Happily.

thors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him;”—and of Jeremy Collier:¹ “He is too much given to horseplay in his railery, and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough.”

¹ The author of an attack on the stage.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY AND PLAYS	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1603-1625 1625-1649	JAMES I CHARLES I	BEN JONSON, 1573-1637 Thomas Dekker, ?1570- ?1540	The Alchemist Old Fortunatus	Timber Anatomy of Mel- ancholy
1628	Petition of Right	John Webster, early 17th cent.	Duchess of Malfi	
1629-40	Charles rules without Parliament	John Fletcher, 1579-1625 Francis Beaumont, 1584- 1616	The Maid's Trag- edy	
1637	Trial of Hampden	Thomas Heywood, early 17th cent.	A Woman Killed with Kindness	
1638	Scottish Covenant	Thomas Middleton, 1570- 1627	The Changeling	
1640	Long Parliament called	Philip Massinger, 1583- 1640	A New Way to Pay Old Debts	
1641	Execution of Strafford	John Ford, 1586-?1640	The Broken Heart	
1642 1642-1646	Theaters Closed The Great Rebellion	James Shirley, 1596-1666 Robert Burton, 1576-1640	The Traitor	
1643	Solemn League and Covenant	John Donne, 1573-1631	Poems	
1644 1645 1645 1649	Battle of Marston Moor Battle of Naseby Execution of Laud Execution of Charles I	George Herbert, 1593-1633 Robert Herrick, 1591-1674 Thomas Carew, 1598-1639 John Suckling, 1609-1641	Poems Hesperides Poems Poems	

CHRONOLOGY — (Continued)

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY AND PLAYS	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1649-1660	THE COMMONWEALTH	Richard Lovelace, 1618-1658	Poems	Areopagitica
1650	Battle of Dunbar	JOHN MILTON, 1608-1674	Paradise Lost	Compleat Angler
1653-1658	OLIVER CROMWELL, PROTECTOR	Isaac Walton, 1593-1683		
1658-1660	RICHARD CROMWELL, PROTECTOR	Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667		Holy Living and Dying
1660-1685	CHARLES II	JOHN BUNYAN, 1628-1688		Pilgrim's Progress
1665	Plague in London	Samuel Butler, 1612-1680	Hudibras	Religio Medici
1666	Great Fire in London	Thomas Browne, 1605-1682	Poems	
1673	The Test Act	Edmund Waller, 1606-1687	Poems	
1685-1688	JAMES II	Abraham Cowley, 1618-1667	Absalom & Achitophel	Of Dramatic Poesy
1685	Insurrection of Monmouth	JOHN DRYDEN, 1631-1700	Venice Preserved	
1688	Trial of the Seven Bishops	Thomas Otway, 1652-1685		
1688	The Revolution	William Wycherley, 1640-1715	The Plain Dealer	
1689-1702	WILLIAM III	William Congreve, 1670-1729	The Mourning Bride	
1689	Bill of Rights	John Locke, 1632-1704		Human Understanding
1689	Battle of the Boyne			Diary
1694	Founding of Bank of England	John Evelyn, 1620-1706		Diary
		Samuel Pepys, 1633-1703		

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

LITERATURE. BEN JONSON. For Ben Jonson, as for his contemporary dramatists, DEKKER, WEBSTER, BEAUMONT, FLETCHER, etc., the most representative plays are to be found in *The Mermaid Series* (Scribner). Good selections from the lyrics of these writers and of other seventeenth century authors are given in Schelling's *Seventeenth Century Lyrics* (Ginn), while sufficient for a brief acquaintance will be found in Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn) and *Century Readings* (Century).

MILTON. The authoritative life of Milton is by Masson, in 6 vols. (Macmillan). Good one volume accounts are given by Pattison (English Men of Letters Series) and by Garnett (Great Writers Series). Masson's edition of Milton's *Poetical Works*, 3 vols. (Macmillan), is the standard, but the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan) is satisfactory for general reading. In addition there are many cheap school editions, especially of the MINOR POEMS and PARADISE LOST. Milton's prose works have been edited by J. A. St. John, 5 vols. (Macmillan); the AREOPAGITICA has been well edited by J. W. Hales (Clarendon Press).

BURTON'S ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY is published in 3 vols., by Bohn. WALTON'S LIVES and THE COMPLEAT ANGLER, as well as JEREMY TAYLOR'S HOLY LIVING and HOLY DYING, are conveniently published in the Temple Classics (Dent). The diaries of PEPYS and EVELYN are both published on India paper by George Newnes.

BUNYAN. The best lives are by Froude (English Men of Letters Series) and by Venables (Great Writers Series). Of Bunyan's chief works, THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS and GRACE ABOUNDING are published by the Clarendon Press. THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, of course, may be had in numerous school editions.

DRYDEN. The works, with life by Walter Scott, revised and edited by Saintsbury, 18 vols. (Putnam), is the best edition. A good life in one volume is Saintsbury's (English Men of Letters Series). The *Globe* one-volume edition (Macmillan) of the *Poetical Works* is good, while the best plays are given in the *Mermaid Series* (Scribner). AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY is given in *Century Readings* (Century); further selections from Dryden's prose are published in Cassell's *National Library*.

SUGGESTED READINGS.

JONSON'S THE ALCHEMIST, DEKKER'S OLD FORTUNATUS, WEBSTER'S DUCHESS OF MALFI, and Beaumont and Fletcher's THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE form a good beginning for early 17th century drama. Of Milton, one should read at least L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO, COMUS, LYCIDAS, a few SONNETS, PARADISE LOST, BOOK I, and selections from the AREOPAGITICA. Bunyan's PILGRIM'S PROGRESS should be read entire. Of Dryden, the beginner should read first ALEXANDER'S FEAST, the SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL, and AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY. Selections from the poets (such as are given in Manly's *English Poetry* or in *Century Readings*)—especially Herbert, Herrick, and Lovelace,—and selections from Walton's COMPLEAT ANGLER, Taylor's HOLY LIVING and HOLY DYING, and Pepys' DIARY complete a fairly representative list.

HISTORY AND CRITICISM. The first half of the century is well covered by Gardiner's *The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution* (Epoch Series); and Masson's *Life of Milton*, 6 vols. (Macmillan), is a mine of historical information. The standard history of the second half of the century is Macaulay's, though it has a strong Whig bias. Other references: *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 4 vols., ed. by Carlyle (Scribner); Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature* (Scribner). See also special chapters in books recommended on p. 433.

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POETRY AND FICTION. A great many novels have been based on seventeenth century history. Among the best are: Scott's *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Woodstock*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Old Mortality*, *The Pirate*, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*; Shorthouse's *John Inglesant*; Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*; and Doyle's *Micah Clarke*. Noyes's *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* give an interesting picture in verse of Ben Jonson and his friends. Browning's play, *Strafford*, the same author's *Cavalier Tunes*, Aytoun's *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, and Scott's *Rokeby* are poems that give a good idea of the Stuart century.

CHAPTER VII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The French influence toward formality and correctness, which Dryden had so ably forwarded in the seventeenth century, continued through almost the entire eighteenth century. At the same time colonization was rapid, especially in America and India; under able leaders England was generally victorious; and under able statesmen the country was generally prosperous. There was a great advance in commercial activity, and the toiling middle class, with more time and money, began to count in the social and literary life. This rapid commercial development, coupled with the French influence, led men away from the country to the city. It is a noteworthy fact that all the authors of importance during the first seventy-five years of the century spent most of their time in London. When they lived in the country, they frequently made it over into trim gardens, arranged with mathematical precision. Woods became groves, decorated with statuary, and were peopled, in the poetry, with the fauns and nymphs of classical tradition.

In such an age naturalness and emotion were at a discount. Reserve, restraint, precision, were the great social and literary virtues. It must not be imagined that London life really attained the French elegance which

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it strove to reproduce. London was a dirty, poorly-lighted city; its inhabitants, a Frenchman would have said, were a very rough set. Nevertheless there was, superficially at least, an elegance which has made the days of Queen Anne famous. The gold-headed cane, the sedan-chair, the coffee-house, the periwig,—all the outward signs were there; and these, in spite of much coarseness, were the signs of an inward, if not always spiritual, grace. The gentlemen and ladies of the eighteenth century were as urbane as English men and women could conceivably be.

If such life turned men's minds to trivialities—as the poetry of the age abundantly shows—it at least gives us a pleasant intimacy with the writers of the day. Milton meditating “the ways of God to men” and Shelley dreaming of the “clear keen joyance” of the lark are more spirits than men; we almost forget that they went about like ordinary persons, eating, sleeping, and passing odd moments in trivial conversation. But the great men of the eighteenth century—Swift, Addison, Pope, Johnson, and their friends—never lose their human likeness; we somehow get to know them intimately as men, incidentally as authors, just as we might know such figures to-day. Pope said,

The proper study of mankind is man,

and thus in a single line voiced the interest of the age—often trivial, but always human, always intensely real.

The literature of such a time was naturally prosaic. Pope is the only great figure in poetry. The prose, however, ranks among the best in our language. Following

the lead of Dryden, Swift and Addison exalted prose to a rank equal with poetry; and in the latter half of the century, the English novel came into being.

Urbanity, however, is not an Englishman's *forte*. His



THE GARDENS AT VERSAILLES

strength, as his literature abundantly shows, is naturalness; and sooner or later he breaks through bonds that attempt to make him something other than what he essentially is. The result in the eighteenth century was that the undercurrent of naturalness, of desire for freedom in thought and action — and consequently in literature — eventually broke out. At the end of the century, instead of restraint, we find men returning to freedom, to the country, to the Middle Age, to emotion — to anything that does not deal with the trivialities and artificialities of social life. The century may be con-

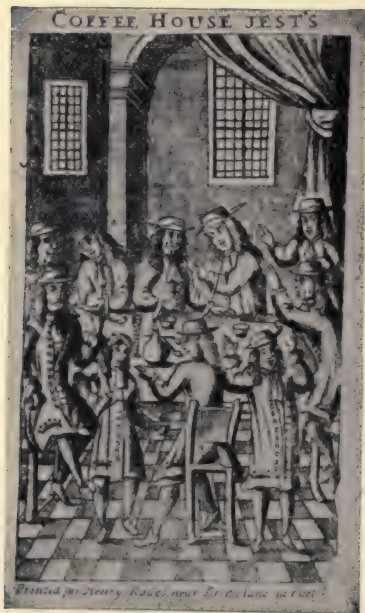
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veniently divided into three periods: The Age of Pope (1700-1740); the Age of Dr. Johnson (1740-1780); and, overlapping a little, The Return to Nature (1770-1800).

THE AGE OF POPE (1700-1740).

In the age of Pope the brutality of Dryden's time gave way to a superficial decency. Addison showed men that it was a contradiction to be elegant in literature and inelegant in morals. This period is primarily the day

of the coffee-house and the city wits. Literature, moreover, was closely associated with politics; nearly all the great writers made their way by political pamphlets, by doing with their pens what the newspaper accomplishes to-day. The special literary features of the time were the perfection of the heroic couplet, the beginning of the newspaper and magazine, and the development of prose style. On account of its attempt to imitate the "golden age" of Virgil



SCENE IN A COFFEE HOUSE
From Boynton's "London in English Literature," by permission of The University of Chicago Press

and Horace, it is sometimes called the "Augustan Age." Often, too, it is named after Queen Anne, though it extended far beyond the limits of her reign.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745).

Possessed of a great mind forced to deal with small things and of a nature instinctively proud and perverse, Swift is one of the most tragic figures in English literature. Capable of strong love and still stronger hate, he passed from bitterness to insanity. "An awful downfall and ruin," says Thackeray.¹ "So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling."

Life. Jonathan Swift was born of English parents in Dublin on November 30, 1667. An uncle gave him the chance of a good education (which he called "the education of a dog") at Kilkenny School and Trinity College, Dublin; but he took little interest in his studies and won his degree only by "special grace." In 1689 he received an appointment as under-secretary to Sir William Temple, a distinguished scholar and diplomatist, who lived at Moor Park in Surrey. The position, however, which involved eating in the kitchen, seemed menial to Swift, and in 1694 he quarreled with Temple and left him. It was a piece of Swift's character to quarrel before leaving; and it was a further piece of his nature not to hesitate about asking favors from a person he had just insulted. In less than a year we find him re-

¹ Thackeray says some brilliant things about Swift, but his picture of the great Dean, in *Henry Esmond* and still more in *The English Humourists*, makes Swift out more savage than he really was.

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questing Temple to recommend him for orders in the ministry. Temple willingly gave him the recommendation, and in 1695 Swift was ordained and appointed to a small parish at Kilroot. In a year, however, he tired of it and returned to the service of Temple, where he remained till the old courtier's death in 1699. It was at this time that he wrote *The Battle of the Books* (1697) and *A Tale of a Tub* (1696-8),¹ full of his genius for satire.

For the first ten years of the new century Swift struggled to gain prominence and, often failing, grew in bitterness. His writings had brought him some fame, and he knew most of the great men in London — though he usually despised them; — but it was not till the return of the Tories to power in 1710 that he became a factor in politics. During these ten years he held a “living” at Laracor, outside of Dublin, but he spent much of his time in London. Along with his increasing bitterness at this time should be noticed the fact that he was getting on in years. Insatiably ambitious and often disappointed, scornful of favors, and past forty when he came into power, Swift had become fairly addicted to savage satire.

Swift's character — the strange contrast of his love and hate — is well brought out by his attitude towards women. He insulted and repulsed two ladies to whom he had once made addresses; and he seemed to find a sort of brutal glory in bullying and bringing to tears the ladies of great houses where he was sometimes a guest;²

¹ Both of these books were published in 1704.

² When Lady Burlington refused his peremptory demand that

yet toward Esther Johnson, the adopted daughter of Sir William Temple, the "Stella" of his poetry, he showed unchanging affection, and when she died in 1728, the light seems to have gone out of his life. This "violent friendship," as Swift called it, which he protested was "much more lasting than violent love," should be remembered while we condemn Swift for his brutal jests. We know that he was far ahead of his age in his conception of woman's part in life; and it is fair to assume that he was often actuated by the same kind of cynical humor that drove Hamlet to mock Ophelia. The situation was so terrible that it became a jest; from love as well as from hate he turned to mockery.

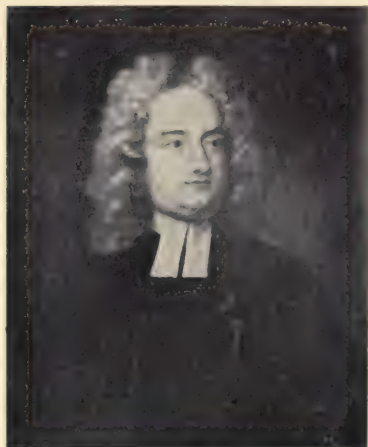
This same jesting with the deepest things of life is apparent in Swift's dealings with men — though not quite so apparent, for the situation was less terrible. Still, as the right hand of the Tory leader, Harley, and the editor of the Tory *Examiner*, he appeared the scourge of political opponents. He demanded apologies and advances from the great and the rich. When told that the Duke of Buckingham was not used to making advances, he replied that he could not help that, for he "always expected advances in proportion to men's quality and more from a Duke than any other man." Swift's glory, however, was short-lived, for in 1713 the Tories went out of power; expecting a Bishopric, he had to be contented with the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin. On the death of Anne in 1714 all hopes of political favor

she sing, he replied, "Why, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you." She retired in tears. The next time Swift saw her he asked: "Pray, madam, are you as proud and ill-natured as when I saw you last?"

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were at an end; but Swift journeyed several times to London, returning thence each time more bitter than before, till finally in 1727 he gave up the quest and remained in Ireland — “a wretched, dirty dog-hole and prison,” he called it; “a place good enough to die in.”

During the first twenty years of the century Swift's



JONATHAN SWIFT

pen was active in writing pamphlets and short satires, and in editing a Tory paper, the *Examiner* (1710-11). He wrote a good deal of verse, but bore out Dryden's comment, “Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet.” In 1724 he made a great stir by his *M. B. Drapier Letters*, attacking a scheme of depreciating the Irish currency.

The poor people of Ireland, to whom he regularly gave a third of his income, treated him as a hero, so much so that Sir Robert Walpole, when he threatened to arrest Swift, was advised not to do so “unless you have ten thousand men behind the warrant.” Until *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), however, nothing so good as the *Battle of the Books* and *The Tale of a Tub* had come from Swift's pen. By *Gulliver* he acquired not only fame in his own day, but for all time.

But in 1726 Swift was too old and too bitter to enjoy his

fame. The last chapters of *Gulliver* show that he was beginning to lose control of his satire, which, for all its ferocity, had gained much force from its terrible restraint. *Polite Conversation* (1738) and *Directions to Servants* (1738) show some of his old power, but the *Modest Proposal* (1729) is characteristic of much of his later work. In this *Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country*, the savage Dean recommends, in grave satire, that five-sixths of the children be fattened and eaten. "I have been assured by a very knowing American," he says, "that a young healthy child, well nursed, is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout." Full of such repulsive jesting, with Stella gone, and insanity growing upon him, Swift spent his last fifteen years in misery. Unlike most of the literary men of the day, he did not frequent the coffee-houses; and though he was full of admiration for Addison and of love for Pope, he was strangely alone in an age of congeniality and sociability. His loneliness, however, was not wholly a defect, for it sprang in part from his uncompromising genuineness and desire to speak the "plain truth." This genuineness, as well as his generosity to the poor and the power of his intellect when he was in middle age, make his last years all the more tragic. He died October 19, 1745. Nearly all of a considerable fortune he left to found St. Patrick's Hospital for the insane.

Works. The best of Swift's satire appears in *The*

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Battle of the Books and in *Gulliver*. The first of these, after giving a history of the rivalry between ancient and modern books in St. James's Library, tells a charming little fable, "The Spider and the Bee," in which the spider represents the moderns, full of poison, engendered "by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age," while the bee figures for the ancients, "furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light." Then commences the battle in St. James's Library, with the victory to the ancients. Gentle but pointed in its satire, the little book is a good example of Swift's earlier manner. Dryden, for instance, in his contest with Virgil, is figured riding on a sorrel gelding; "but his speed was less than his noise; for his horse, old and lean, spent the dregs of his strength in a high trot, which, though it made slow advances, yet caused a loud clashing of armour, terrible to hear." Finally Dryden "soothed up the good ancient; called him father, and, by a large deduction of genealogies, made it plainly appear that they were nearly related. . . . Then they agreed to exchange horses; ¹ but, when it came to the trial, Dryden was afraid and utterly unable to mount."

The story of *Gulliver* is too well known to need retelling, for even those who miss the satire enjoy the amusing experiences of Lemuel Gulliver amidst pygmies and giants. Swift, of course, was thinking all the time of the pettiness and grossness of mankind; and in the first chapters of the book revealed them with sufficient humor to soften the sting. In the last part, however, the Houyhnhnms, enlightened horses, are pictured as far

¹ Dryden, it will be remembered, translated Virgil.

superior to men, who, in the degraded, bestial form of Yahoos, are their servants; and here the satire passes decent moderation and becomes savage. The clever invention and the delightful humor of the earlier part have nevertheless set *Gulliver* on the select shelf where *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pilgrim's Progress* stand; it is one of the few really great books.

A word as to Swift's prose style. Any one reading *Gulliver* must be struck by the nice choice of words and the easy rhythm of the sentences; but what counts for even more is the thrift with which Swift uses his language. It is a quality impossible to illustrate by a sentence, but as one reads and re-reads Swift, it becomes apparent that no writer, not even Addison, says so exactly what he means and says it with so little waste of words.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719).

Addison was the most successful essayist of the early eighteenth century. A quiet, retiring man, he nevertheless frequented the coffee-houses, where he learned, like his "Spectator," to know the ways of mankind; and he was able, by his kindly satire, to lead men to better ways: as Macaulay puts it, he "reconciled wit and virtue." Like most of his great literary contemporaries, he took part in public life, and in this field, though Swift's power for a short period was greater than his, he rose far higher than any writers of his day.

Life. Joseph Addison was born May 1, 1672, at Milston, near Salisbury. His father, Lancelot Addison, who was appointed Dean of Lichfield in 1683, was a man of taste and ability. The boy was sent to Charter House



JOSEPH ADDISON

School, in London, where he became a close friend of Dick Steele, with whom he was later to be associated in literature. From Charter House he went to Oxford in 1687. His career there was a long and distinguished one. After two years at Queen's College, Latin verses won him a scholarship at Magdalen College, from which in 1693 he received the de-

gree of M.A. There he remained for the next six years, being made a Fellow in 1698. He had written an *Account of the Greatest English Poets* (1693) and was already well known for his verses. Lord Halifax perceived what a valuable addition Addison's pen would be to the Whig cause, and so in 1699 procured him a pension from the Crown of £300. Addison thereupon abandoned his idea of taking orders and traveled abroad for four years, to prepare himself for public life. On his return the Whigs were out of power, but his poem, *The Campaign* (1704), celebrating Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, brought him great fame, and shortly after, in 1706, he was appointed Under Secretary of State. With the same easy success he continued in his political career. When the Whigs came back into full

power, in 1708, he was elected to the House of Commons and appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. In 1710, when the heyday of Swift began, he lost his position, but got it back on the accession of George I, was elected in 1715 to a seat on the Board of Trade, and in 1717 was appointed Secretary of State.



MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

During these years of successful public life Addison's pen was active. In 1706 he produced an opera called *Rosamond*; in 1709-11 he wrote for Steele's *Tatler*, and in 1711-13 he contributed the largest part of *The Spectator*; in 1713 his drama *Cato* appeared and won great popularity; and during the years 1713-1719, he contributed largely to *The Guardian*, *The Freeholder*, and the *Old Whig*. Next to *Cato*, his political writings were the chief cause of his fame in his own day, but, while

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these have now sunk into obscurity, his gentle satire in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, above all his picture of Sir Roger de Coverley, are the reason for his lasting fame.

The quiet fairness of Addison's political writings was of a piece with his nature. His serenity and easy suc-



"ADDISON'S WALK," OXFORD

cess were no doubt exasperating at times, and several, among them Steele and Pope, had quarrels with him. But Steele was impetuous and Pope disposed to back-biting. Addison was amazingly unruffled under any circumstances. In this quiet gentlemanly way he presided for a time over the wits at Button's Coffee-House. But his presence was felt rather than heard; he was too shy to take part in general talk and too reserved to enter into

disputation. It was said, however, that among a few friends he talked beautifully. "There is no such thing," he himself wrote, "as real conversation but between two persons." He drew his own picture in the figure of the Spectator, modest, observant, urbane.

While he was at the height of his political fame Addison married, in 1716, the Countess of Warwick, and thereafter lived at Holland House. Soon after his appointment as Secretary of State, however, he was forced to resign on account of ill health, and two years later, June 17, 1719, he died. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Works. In his own generation Addison was counted a great poet. Without doubt certain passages of *Cato* and *The Campaign*, as well as his hymn beginning "The spacious firmament on high," show a large dignity uncommon in his age. A good example of his poetry at its best is the description in *the Campaign* of Marlborough as the angel directing the storm —

So when an angel by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

But the heroic couplet was capable of better things than this, as Pope was soon to show. Addison's real merit lay in his essays, particularly in *The Spectator*.

Richard Steele (1672-1729), his school friend, was the pioneer, but Addison did the better work. In 1709 Steele conceived the idea of a small periodical, *The*

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Tatler, each number to consist chiefly of a brief essay in the "familiar" style on such subjects as "Mr. Bickerstaff visits a Friend," or "Recollections of Childhood." This was a new kind of paper, from which the later magazine was to grow. *The Tatler* ran for two years;



RICHARD STEELE

then Steele conceived the idea of *The Spectator*, to be issued similarly. Addison wrote only 42 out of 271 numbers of *The Tatler*, but he did the chief work in *The Spectator*, 274 numbers out of 555. What is more, he is responsible for the three chief characters in the Sir Roger de Coverley Papers, which appeared from time to time in *The Spectator*. The

most important of these characters is of course the old knight himself. His quaint figure and sturdy honesty, whether he is seen in his own church or in town at the theater or the Abbey, are perennially potent among all sorts of readers. Sir Roger belongs with the immortal few — Falstaff, Don Quixote, Mr. Pickwick — who have become household names. If Addison had done nothing else but draw Sir Roger, he would still hold a very high place in our literature.

But he did a good deal more — in these very *Specta-*

tor papers. Taine says, "It is no small thing to make morality fashionable. Addison did it, and it remained in fashion." The affectation of Dryden's time, that to be clever you must be immoral, was still common in the days of Queen Anne. Gradually, however, Addison led men to a cleaner wit, a more wholesome outlook on life. This he did by what can hardly be called satire — so gentle was it; he exposed with great good-nature the frivolity and vanity of the gay world. Sometimes he would write a paper on so trivial a subject as "The Use of the Fan"; at other times on so serious a subject as "Truth"; but he was never harsh or dogmatic; and — this is the great point — he was always bright and interesting. All at once, as it were, it became the thing to be decent; and if the decency was only skin-deep, if the Englishman was really the Yahoo that Swift saw, at least he aspired, under Addison's lead, to better things.

This, however, was Addison's message to his particular age; it has little more than historical interest for us. The grace and urbanity of Addison's prose concerns us more closely. "Whoever wishes," Dr. Johnson wrote, "to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." It would be difficult to name half a dozen men in the whole history of our literature who have written such good prose as Addison's.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744).

Among the great men of his day Pope is the most representative of the age, the most truly "Augustan." Brilliant, witty, shallow, incapable of great passions, he

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is the very genius of the time. More than this, Pope fixed the fashion in verse; he was the standard of poets for half a century. In his life we shall find a strange mixture of small deceit and genuine hatred for the sordid and mean in literature. In the one instance we shall understand what Lady Mary Montagu meant when she called him the "wicked wasp of Twickenham"; in the other, what Dr. Johnson felt when he said, "A thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." When the worst has been said of his spiteful revenges and of the limitations of his poetry, it must be realized that he perfected the heroic couplet and that he made literature a calling in itself. Shakespeare was primarily a dramatist; Milton, though dedicated to poetry, was occupied with public office; Dryden wrote for fame and favor; in fact, till Pope's day mere writers, men who were nothing else, were usually looked down upon. Pope made literature a dignified *profession*. "He served literature," says A. M. Ward, one of his best biographers, "neither for power, like Swift; nor, like nearly all his contemporaries, for place and pay; not even for fame chiefly, but for her own sake."

Life. Alexander Pope was born May 21, 1688, in the heart of London. His father, a successful linen merchant, retired while Pope was a small boy to Binfield, near Windsor Forest. Deformed in body and a Roman Catholic, at a time when Papists were in great disfavor, Pope was shut out from an ordinary schooling and association with other boys. He grew up literally in his father's library, learning there a useful if superficial



ALEXANDER POPE
From the painting by Jervas

knowledge of the classics and beginning, while still a boy, to "lisp in numbers." Much influenced by the advice of William Walsh—"we have had great poets, but never one great poet that was correct,"—he worked hard over the form of his verse. His *Pastorals* (1709), written when he was in his teens, brought him some popularity, and his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) set him, at twenty-three, among the best poets of his time. Already he showed a mastery which made the generous admire and the envious assail. In his handling of the heroic couplet he surpassed his master, Dryden.

With the envious Pope had much to do, for he himself was suspicious and envious. He had already quarreled with Wycherley, a decadent dramatist of Restoration days, who had sought help from Pope to prop his failing powers. Pope, flattered at first, was friendly enough; then, realizing his own skill and his friend's decrepitude, he insulted Wycherley; and years later, to save his fair name, published an altered correspondence. It is unnecessary to go through all of Pope's quarrels; the above instance is a symbol of how he bore himself; but it should be remembered that Swift was about the only man of his time with whom he did not quarrel, and that he even stooped to deceiving Swift in his friend's old age. He rightly resented unkind references to his religion and to his deformity; but if we think meanly of Wycherley for speaking of his "crazy carcase" and of Dennis for calling him a "hunch-backed toad," we must think still less of Pope for resorting to such treachery as altered correspondence. Addison knew what he was saying when he wrote to Lady Mary Montagu: "Leave

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Pope as soon as you can; he will certainly play you some devilish trick else."

If the *Essay on Criticism* brought Pope prominence, the *Rape of the Lock* (1712) brought him preëminence. Older as well as younger men looked up to him as the greatest living poet. In a period when artificial nature was popular, his *Windsor Forest* (1713) added to his fame, and his *Translation of the Iliad*, the first book of which was published in 1715, brought him wealth as well. With these thoroughly "Augustan" poems, imitative of what Pope and his contemporaries considered truly classical, his *Eloisa to Abelard* contrasts strikingly. Based on a story popular in the Middle Ages, it embodies more emotion than any other of Pope's writings; but the feeling is largely throttled by the heroic couplet. The same may be said of the *Iliad*, finished in 1720, with the added comment that Pope did not know enough Greek or sufficiently understand the spirit of Homer to make a good translation. This was perceived by some critics of his own day. "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope," Bentley said to him, "but you must not call it *Homer*." Generally speaking, however, Pope's *Iliad* and his *Odyssey* (1725-1726) were so popular that for more than a century they overshadowed all other translations.

When he first became famous, Pope sought to be a coffee-house dictator, and, counting himself the inheritor of Dryden, he for a while lorded it over the wits at Will's in opposition to the court of "King Joseph" at Button's. But his body could not stand the strain. In 1718, with the money realized on his *Homer*, he moved to a villa at Twickenham, on the Thames just west of

London. Here, as in his verses, he was formal, elegant. He laid out geometrical gardens and artificial grottoes — made, in fact, a sort of miniature Versailles,—where, as king of the monarchy of letters, he strove to bring back the golden age. He lived at Twickenham till his death in 1744.

Among the many writings of Pope during his life at Twickenham three stand out conspicuously: the *Essay on Man* (1732–34), the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (1735), and the *Dunciad* (1728–1743). The first, pretending to be a philosophical poem, amounts only to a collection of clever sayings, many of them second-hand, but it shows Pope's "power of versification" undiminished. The *Epistle*, the best example of Pope's "familiar" verse, is particularly famous for the lines on Atticus — in which he takes revenge on Addison. In the *Dunciad* Pope pays off old scores — so many of them that the modern reader is bewildered by the host of obscure names and disgusted by the endless abuse;— but, equally characteristic of him, he makes unflinching war on "Grub Street"—on the venal scribblers that "stung honest folk for a crown piece."

Works. Pope's nature-poetry, like that of his contemporaries, has one very serious defect: it does not depict nature. Either he describes nature made over by man, where

Grove nods at grove; each alley has a brother;

or he pictures a conventional scene, peopled with classic gods and goddesses. Human nature was the only kind of nature that the Augustans understood. And since the

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poets usually observed human nature as it appeared in the *salon*, they naturally handled light themes best. For the perfect writing of this bric-a-brac, Dresden-China poetry there was necessary a nimble wit, the power to turn a pretty phrase. This wit and power no one supplied better than Pope, and of this type of poetry — to which the heroic couplet, with its formal grace, is admirably suited — there is no better example than his *Rape of the Lock*, a poem which tells how a young gallant dared to snip off a lock of Arabella Fermor's hair.

Perfection of form, then — the ideal of the times — was Pope's great merit. In his philosophical poems even, such as the *Essay on Criticism* and the *Essay on Man*, there is no sustained thought, no progressive argument. But there are many brilliant phrases, clever maxims, — each neatly packed away in its couplet. Such couplets, when they are clever, make favorite quotations; and Pope, though the thoughts are not always original, has given us many familiar quotations. A few of these may serve to remind the reader that, more often than he realizes, his indebtedness is to Pope.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.

An honest man's the noblest work of God.

'Tis education forms the common mind:
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

True wit is nature to advantage dressed.

To err is human, to forgive divine.

The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

These quotations give an excellent idea of Pope's heroic couplet — compact, carefully balanced, neatly turned. But when Dr. Johnson spoke of Pope's "power of versification" he meant more than this. Except in dealing with nature, Pope was a master at adapting the rhythm and language to his subject, at making, as he himself put it, the sound "seem an echo to the sense." A good example of how he could do this occurs in the *Essay on Criticism*, in the passage where he illustrates the idea at the same time that he explains it:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow:
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.

It is safe to defy any one to read the first two lines of this passage swiftly, or the last two slowly.

When we turn from Pope's versification to the thought of his poems, we find him at his best in satire. Like Dryden, he understood satire; he distinguished it from senseless and extravagant abuse; before he turned on his victim, he gave some measure of praise — raised a "presumption" of generosity in his own favor, as it were. Of course he finally overstated the case — else it would not have been satire; but he prepared the way so delicately and overstated so moderately that his satire

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was effective. The following lines on Addison are not true, but they are so nearly true that they exactly served Pope's purpose of making his readers think that Addison was a little worse than the fact:

Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;

.
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

One may well wonder, if this were all, why Pope's is so distinguished a name. A great versifier, a clever satirist — is this sufficient reason for such glory? The picture, however, is not complete without the additional point — a most important point in judging a poet — that Pope occasionally rises to noble poetry. Few better examples of this can be found than the closing lines of the *Dunciad*:

Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word;
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all.

It is said that Pope's voice failed him when he repeated

these lines; and when Dr. Johnson was told that this was the case, he remarked, "And well it might, sir, for they are noble lines."

DANIEL DEFOE (1661-1731).

A clever satirist and pamphleteer, Defoe reminds us of the men of his time. In many ways, however, he has little in common with his age. He wrote in a careless, redundant style, instead of with precise formality; and socially he did not belong with the city wits who gathered at the coffee-houses. A shrewd journalist, political jobber, and jack of all trades, he left no stone unturned to further his own ends; and in both public and private life he was given to double dealing. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that through *Robinson Crusoe* he enjoys a distinction rivaled among his contemporaries by no one.

Life. Defoe, born in London in 1661,¹ was the son of a butcher. All we know of his education is that he spent five years at an academy in Newington Green. Swift referred to him as "an illiterate fellow, whose name I forget," but, though Defoe was not an accomplished scholar, illiteracy cannot be charged against a man who knew so much—wherever he got it—and who wrote to such good purpose.

During about a dozen years after he left school, Defoe turned his hand to all sorts of work: he was a hosier, a commission merchant, a manufacturer of tiles, a partisan of Monmouth in the rebellion of 1685, and a writer of pamphlets. In 1692 he failed financially and was for some time in hiding; but two years later, for his pam-

¹ Possibly as early as 1659.

phlets in favor of William III, he was made Accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty, a position which he held for five years. In 1701 he wrote the *True Born Englishman*, in defense of the king. The most remarkable work of these early years, however, is the *Essay on Projects* (1697), in which Defoe shows great knowledge



DEFOE IN THE PILLORY

of men and affairs and a prophetic insight into modern business problems. In 1702 a satire, his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, brought him to the pillory with fine and imprisonment. But Defoe had a way of coming out on top, and his clever *Hymn to the Pillory* won him so much popularity that the authorities had to remove him at once from the stocks. In

prison his pen was as active as ever. While there he wrote his *History of the Great Storm*, as vivid as if he had really seen it, and began his *Review of the Affairs of France*, a periodical which he wrote almost entirely by himself and issued for a dozen years. After a little more than a year in jail he was released; for Harley, later the patron of Swift, saw Defoe's value as a pamphleteer.

To follow Defoe through his political windings for the next fifteen years would be a long story. He usually

came out on the winning side. A Whig heretofore, he became an ardent Tory under Harley; four years later he served the Whigs; and in 1710, when the Tories came back, he asserted that his true allegiance was to the Queen and so found himself a Tory once more. Within a year after the accession of George I, however, though he had been found guilty of libel against the new King, he managed his last change of party; as a Whig now, he actually served the new government — served it by playing false with a Jacobite friend, one Mist, whose Journals he pretended to aid, but really kept “disabled and enervated.”

Through all this political activity Defoe's pen was busy on a variety of subjects: the *History of the Union*¹ (1709); *The Secret History of One Year*² (1714); a *History of the Wars of Charles XII* (1715); and numerous pamphlets and journals. *The Apperition of Mrs. Veal* (1706) was his first fiction, and it points the way to his greatest work. Nearly sixty when *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) appeared, he continued for ten years to pour out tales of adventure, such as *Captain Singleton* (1720) and *Moll Flanders* (1722). His *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) is as vivid as the diary of Pepys.³ During these years, moreover, he kept up his business schemes, which usually ended in disaster. In 1729 he was hiding from creditors again. Finally, worn out with gout, apoplexy, and hard work, he died in 1731.⁴

Works. Defoe was no poet, but he could make verses

¹ That is, between England and Scotland.

² The year after the accession of William III.

³ The Plague Year was 1665, when Defoe was only four.

⁴ The date of Defoe's death is not certain, but investigation favors 1731.

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jingle to good effect. His *Hymn to the Pillory*, beginning

Hail, hieroglyphic state machine,
Contrived to punish fancy in,

is the best example of his verse. His political writings have even less literary value now. His fame, therefore, rests on his novels, particularly on *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe got the idea of his story chiefly from the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, who returned to London in 1711. As in his *History of the Great Storm* and his *Journal of the Plague Year*, Defoe wrote with such profusion of minute detail and such likeness to the truth that he might really have gone through the experiences of Crusoe; he knew more about Selkirk's adventures than Selkirk did himself. This style of story, the adventures of an inconspicuous person, often of a rogue or vagabond — whereas the old tales had dealt usually with noble and knightly persons, — was already popular on the Continent and, though it was not new in England, was first made popular there by Defoe. Defoe's importance, then, is two-fold: he was the chief fore-runner of the English novelists; and he wrote one of the few books that is read and re-read all over the world.

THE AGE OF JOHNSON (1740-1780).

So far as the great writers of Johnson's time are concerned, the classical tradition of Pope's Age is carried on. And though the city life of the day smacks more of the tavern than of the drawing-room — though the delicate wit of Addison and Pope is gone — no great distinction need be made between the periods of Pope and Johnson

were it not for two important developments: the novel and the "return to nature."

The novel should be clearly distinguished from the romances and tales which preceded it. They dealt chiefly with a succession of incidents, rarely woven into a plot — that is, an arrangement by which all the incidents work together to produce a main situation. Further, though some of the old tales depicted vivid characters, they rarely portrayed the *development* of those characters through successive chapters; and still more rarely did they develop their characters in relation to the development of the plot. A novel, then, is a fictitious story in which the development of characters or of events or of both either produces a main situation or brings out some striking condition of real life.¹ *Sir Roger de Coverley* thus has decided characteristics of the novel; *Robinson Crusoe* has still more. It was not till Richardson and Fielding, however, that this form of literature reached anything like maturity.

The other development — the return to nature — began very timidly and met with sturdy opposition from Dr. Johnson and his allies. Slowly it gained ground, nevertheless, till in the last twenty years of the century it had become more than a reaction: it was an age in itself.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784).

Johnson was the last of the great literary dictators. He held, even more than Dryden and Pope, a position

¹ There are many variations, of course, from the narrow definition. The "historical novel," for instance, is not history and only tends to be a novel, but in its very selection of those details which serve the plot it is a good example of the main distinction between the novel and narrative history. See appendix, p. 416.

of authority among the writers of his time — a position difficult for us to realize in a day when no single man's word is law. Before the leveling process of modern democracy, however, before the French Revolution, a dictator was as natural in letters as in the state. That Johnson rose from poverty to such power, especially



SAMUEL JOHNSON

among men like Burke, Garrick, and Reynolds, is the best proof of his towering intellect and masterful personality. He was at his best in conversation, particularly in contention; in the famous "club" which gathered round him he could talk any man down except Burke; and when logic failed him, he thundered his opponent into silence. In spite of his

uncouth figure and bullying threats, however, Johnson won his preëminence by real merit: by his vigorous sincerity, by "a memory that would convict any author of plagiarism," by a judgment which commanded respect, and by a sympathy which took strong hold on men's hearts. Boswell, his faithful biographer, who filled several volumes with the remarks of his hero, has given us a vivid picture of the great man. No one in all literature stands out more prominently as a personality than Dr. Johnson. And though his books are written in

a stilted, sententious style, and so are little read to-day, his conversation, as recorded, abounds in lively humor and sturdy common-sense.

Life. Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield on September 18, 1709. In the shop of his father, who was a bookseller, he early began his acquaintance with literature; and possessed of a marvelous memory and a veritable greed for books, he acquired not only a thorough knowledge of the classics, but a great fund of miscellaneous information. "Sir," he said to Boswell years later, "in my early years I read very hard; it is a sad reflection but a true one that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now." Ungainly, half blind, afflicted with scrofula, and depressed by fits of melancholy, he got on poorly with other boys, but at school he was counted the "best scholar." In 1728 he went to Oxford, but his course there was irregular, interrupted by poverty and disease, and he left in 1731 without a degree. Pride, accentuated to sensitiveness, made these years unhappy for him; but through the pride and gloom his sturdy independence gradually asserted itself. The story — how he flung out the window a pair of shoes left kindly at his door, because he would rather stand honestly on his own feet, "in frost and mud if need be," than walk in another man's shoes,—reveals the sensitiveness which was to bring him so much suffering, but it shows, too, the sturdy honesty which was to bring him success.

It was five years before Johnson went up to London and took to writing as a profession. For a time, to be sure, he had lived as a bookseller's "hack" in Birmingham, but most of these years were spent at Lichfield, in

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unsuccessful school-teaching. His "convulsive starts and odd gesticulations" frightened parents, and he had only three pupils altogether, among whom was Garrick. In 1735 he married Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow years older than himself. Fat, coarse, "painted half an inch thick," and dressed in "flaring and fantastick" clothes, she appeared to near-sighted Johnson the most beautiful of her sex.

In 1737 Johnson sought his fortune in London. "But literature," as Macaulay says, "had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not yet begun to flourish under the patronage of the public." Johnson, like other hack-writers of the day, was forced to live in a garret and to eat mean fare in underground cook-shops, where the only napkin was the back of a Newfoundland dog. Soon he found work on the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and his satiric poem, *London* (1738) brought him fame if not riches. His *Life of Savage* (1744) brought him added distinction, and in 1747 he was invited by several booksellers to compile a *Dictionary of the English Language*. The Earl of Chesterfield, who was addressed as patron, had not counted on Johnson's uncouth presence. He "was by no means desirous," says Macaulay, "to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud . . . by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow and ate like a cormorant." The upshot was that Chesterfield left Johnson to work his own way in poverty and obscurity till, eight years later, the *Dictionary* was finished; then the Earl, writing two papers in its praise, was ready to play the patron. But Johnson remarked to Garrick,

"I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language; and does he now send out two cock-boats to tow me into harbor?" And to Chesterfield he wrote: "Seven years, my lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary,¹ and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it."

While he was at work on the *Dictionary*, Johnson found time for several literary labors. His *Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), in the style of his *London*, increased his fame; in the same year Garrick produced his tragedy *Irene*, written chiefly in Lichfield days; and in 1750 he began *The Rambler*, a periodical after the style of Addison's *Spectator*. *The Rambler*, which ran for two years, was widely read and greatly praised; in fact, it set Johnson permanently in a position to scorn, three years later, the tardy help of Chesterfield. *The Idler* (1758-1760), a similar periodical, met with similar suc-

¹ Johnson's wife died in 1752.

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cess; and *Rasselas* (1759), a novel written in a week to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, enjoyed a long popularity.

Though Johnson's literary work continued till his death, after 1762 he was less active than formerly. The cause of this was a pension from George III of £300 a year; and Johnson, who told Boswell that "no man but a block-head ever wrote except for money," now found it possible and comfortable to diminish labors which hitherto had been arduous. This was not unfortunate for the world, since Johnson in these last years was able to give time to friends and conversation. He was granted the degree of "doctor" by Oxford and was given a professorship by the Royal Academy. It is at this time that we find him presiding over the "club," among men of such various accomplishments as Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith, Gibbon, and Burke. These men met once a week at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, and what they said, especially what Johnson said, could make or mar the reputation of a book. On certain points — such as Scotchmen and politics — he was violently prejudiced. "Oats" he had defined in his Dictionary as "a grain which is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people"; and of his friend Burke he said, "Sir, he is a cursed Whig, a bottomless Whig, as they all are now." This Tory prejudice appears in his pamphlet, *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), written against the American colonists, and appears again amusingly when, on being asked what he replied to a compliment from the king, he said, "It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign." Unfitted as Johnson was to dis-



DR. JOHNSON AND HIS "CLUB"

cuss politics, however, no man was better fitted to discuss literature and manners; and though Boswell recorded much that was trivial—as Johnson's reply to the question, "What would you do, sir, if locked up in a tower with a baby?"—the great body of the conversation set down gives us a clear picture of his humor and wisdom. What gave these qualities backbone, moreover, was his rugged sincerity. "Clear your mind of cant," he said to Boswell; and nothing could be more characteristic than his frank reply to a lady who asked him why he defined "pastern" as the "knee of a horse,"—"Ignorance, madam," he answered simply, "pure ignorance."

Johnson spent much time in his later years at the

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house of a Mr. Thrale, a wealthy brewer, whose brilliant wife was for a dozen years the great lexicographer's intimate friend and admirer. Besides the Thrales and his literary friends, moreover, Johnson had a third circle of acquaintances. Ready to resent the action of a rich patron like Chesterfield, or to beat an insolent bookseller, like Osborne, Johnson submitted to all sorts of impostors among the poor. At one time he had living under his roof in a court off Fleet Street a blind old lady named Mrs. Williams, the destitute Mrs. Desmoulins and her daughter Polly, and a quack doctor named Levett. This "strange menagerie" he supported for years, though they complained and quarreled most of the time.

There are many anecdotes of Johnson's mannerisms — how he went back to touch the posts in the streets, how he twitched off the slipper of a lady next him at table, — but in noticing the grotesqueness and his great puffing form, we must not lose sight of the fact that he was able to carry these things off. Men loved him as well as admired him.

Though Johnson wrote little after he received his pension, he edited *Shakespeare's Plays* in 1765, wrote in 1775 a record of his journey with Boswell to the Western Islands of Scotland, and produced, between 1777 and 1781, the prefaces for an edition of English poets — prefaces later collected as his *Lives of the Poets*. Soon after, he was attacked by dropsy and in 1784 (Dec. 13) he died — refusing just before his death to take opiates, "for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." He was buried with great honor beside Garrick in Westminster Abbey.

Works. Johnson talked better than he wrote. His love of balanced sentences and of long Latin words produced a pompous style popular in his own day, but no longer read. His *Rambler*, for instance, lacks the charm of the *Spectator* largely because it wants Addison's graceful style. The same may be said, generally, of all Johnson's prose, though in his letters and the *Lives of the Poets*, which approach his conversational style, there is less of the pompous balance. *Rasselas*, his novel,—an Abyssinian tale,—goes so far as to transplant eighteenth century manners and ideas to a savage people, while the characters all talk alike—in stilted, elegant sentences. The same general criticism may be made of Johnson's poetry: full of thought, vigor, and polish, it is ponderous, difficult for any other generation to read. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that Johnson was one of the most popular writers in his own time; and, if we find his works hard to read, we should realize that of the writers of the heroic couplet Dryden, Pope, and Goldsmith are the only poets still read widely, while of eighteenth century prose, in essay form, Addison and Burke are the



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JAMES BOSWELL

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only writers who still claim considerable attention. The fact is, the so-called "classic" movement had done its work: poetry and prose had been reduced to symmetry and order. Dr. Johnson was the last of the old school; a reaction was at hand.

To understand Johnson's power over language, then, we must turn to his conversations. Thanks to Boswell, we may count these a considerable part of his works. They abound with sayings that have become familiar quotations; sayings that reveal the humor, wisdom, sincerity — in short, the greatness — of the great dictator of letters. "It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives"—"A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden"—"Attack is the reaction. I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds"—"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel"—"Hell is paved with good intentions." It is such sentences as these that justify Johnson's fame.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774).

Like Johnson, Goldsmith fought his way up from poverty and obscurity by the power of his pen. But unlike Johnson, he wrote better than he talked; in fact, he said so many foolish things that, Boswell always excepted, he was the butt of the "club." Still, every one loved him: a great-hearted, mirthful vagabond. And he was a man, Doctor Johnson said, "who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do." The fame of the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, and *She Stoops to Conquer* needs no champion.

Life. Oliver Goldsmith was born on November 10,

1728, in the village of Pallas, near Dublin. The son of a father as kindly and incompetent as Dr. Primrose in his own *Vicar of Wakefield*, he grew up in what Irving calls "virtue and poverty." Young Oliver passed a picturesque youth, beginning with his schooling under "Paddy" Byrne and continuing through an irregular career at Trinity College, Dublin. Once, with the intention of going to America, he started for Cork, but he spent most of his money before he got out of Dublin. After graduating from college, in 1750, he studied for the ministry, but presented himself for ordination in scarlet breeches and was refused by the bishop. Again he started for America, but his ship got away while he was gaming in a tavern. Thereafter he studied medicine in Edinburgh for a couple of years, and then went to the Continent with the avowed purpose of completing his work. Most of his time, however, was spent in wandering about the country, earning his way by playing the flute —

Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance forgetful of the noontide hour.

Finally, like so many "poor-devil authors," he found his way to London. There he lived for a while at the top of "Breakneck Stairs" or "among the beggars of Axe Lane." For a time he set up as a doctor and applied in 1758 for a medical appointment to India. It is characteristic that before the examination he spent all his money on fine clothes and better lodgings; and it is equally to the point that he failed in the examination — for he usually failed in everything but writing.

Gradually his pen became known. His writings, in

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The Bee (1759) and in Newberry's *Public Ledger* (1760) attracted the attention of Dr. Johnson, who sought him out and befriended him. The burly doctor over-rode the objections to his being made an original member of the "club" in 1764; and the same year, when Goldsmith had squandered his recent prosperity on new lodgings in Wine Office Court, Johnson helped him to sell the manuscript of *The Vicar* for sixty pounds. It was not published till two years later (1766), so the first work which brought Goldsmith conspicuous fame was *The Traveller* (1764). His other long poem, *The Deserted Village*, belongs to the year 1770, while his two plays, *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, belong to the years 1767 and 1773 respectively. Besides these masterpieces, Goldsmith, made honorary professor of history in 1769 by the Royal Academy, wrote an *English History* (1764), a *Roman History* (1769), a *Greek History* (1774), and a *History of Animated Nature* (1774). Concerning the last of these Johnson said: "Goldsmith, sir, will give us a very fine book upon the subject; but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history." In the *Retaliation* (1774), a poem in reply to Garrick's jests at his expense, Goldsmith showed that he could hold his own in written repartee.

Goldsmith never settled into the dignity of the rest of the literary group to which he belonged. He was a simple youth all his life, delighting in gay waistcoats, befriending the poor, and managing to exist only through the charity of his friends. In his forty-seventh year he died suddenly, owing two thousand pounds. "Was ever

poet so trusted before?" Johnson wrote to Boswell; and Reynolds, "who passed no day without a line," was so moved that he "did not touch the pencil for that day."

Works. In three fields of literature Goldsmith equaled any writer of his day. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, unlike most of the novels of the time, escapes from the tedious elegance that only a Georgian could endure; it has taken its place beside *Sir Roger* and *Gulliver*. "Goldsmith did everything happily," says Coleridge; and no comment could better describe the charm of the prose in *The Vicar*, prose as graceful as Addison's, as humorous as — no one's but Goldsmith's.

In the *Deserted Village* Goldsmith revealed that, of all those following Pope's tradition, no one could turn a heroic couplet better than he. The point of the poem may be exaggerated; that is, the first scene, of "sweet Auburn" in "peace and plenty," pictures an English, not an Irish, village; whereas the same village deserted, in misery, turns out to be Irish enough; but this little inconsistency is largely beside the point. The chief charm of the poem lies in the picture of the village preacher,

passing rich with forty pounds a year,

whose

pity gave ere charity began;

in the descriptions of the pleasant scene; and in the happy turn of the verse. Goldsmith, alone with Pope, showed that the heroic couplet might on occasion reach lofty expression — as in the concluding lines about the country parson:

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To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

In this poem, too, as we shall have reason to notice later, Goldsmith showed that he felt the new impulse of the return to nature. Except that it is in heroic couplets, it belongs, in association, less with Johnson than with Cowper and Gray.

The third field in which Goldsmith displayed extraordinary skill is the drama. His special contribution to his age was that he, together with Sheridan, author of *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*, dealt the death-blow to the sentimental plays popular in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In addition, Goldsmith was the only man of his day besides Sheridan to write a play that "goes" as well now as it did over a hundred years ago; *She Stoops to Conquer* has perennial success.

EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797).

"Burke," Dr. Johnson said, "does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full." And the Whig leader, Fox, remarked, "I have learnt more from my right honorable friend than from all the men with whom I ever conversed." Yet Burke, though he was a recognized power in the State and in literature, did not achieve the political distinction expected by his friends. This was due partly to the fact that he was a philosopher rather than a practical politician: he was

nearly always on the minority side. But it was due largely to his irascible nature; once he threw a book at the Treasurer of the Navy and another time he told the House of Commons that he "could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with greater melody and more comprehension." Now, however, when the little men of his time have fallen into obscurity, he towers above nearly all of his contemporaries, and "the noble Lord in the blue ribband"¹ is scarcely remembered but for his inglorious part in Burke's speech.

Life. Born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, Burke spent his early manhood in literary work, publishing in 1756 a treatise on *The Sublime and the Beautiful*. Beginning in 1759, he wrote Dodsley's *Annual Register* for thirty years. A few years later we find him a member of Johnson's "Club" and a great friend of Johnson, Garrick, and Reynolds.

Burke entered public life in 1761, as private secretary to "Single Speech" Hamilton. In 1765 he was elected to the House of Commons, rose rapidly to prominence, if not to great place, and till 1794 was intimately associated with politics. A moderate Whig, he championed the cause of the Americans in 1775, but fifteen years later he won, though he did not deserve it, the name of turncoat for denouncing the Revolution in France. Though by this position he found himself on the king's side, he never became a Tory; but he had to break with the more violent Whigs. His political creed, in short, was *constitutional liberty*—"Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is in my opinion safe"; and if

¹ Lord North.

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he resented the tyranny of the king in the case of the Americans, he feared far more the tyranny of the French mob. Besides America and France, Burke made a careful study of the situation in India and led the impeachment charges against Warren Hastings. Here, as in his American work, he failed, in spite of his wisdom and eloquence; but the world now recognizes that England's later reforms in the administration of her colonies were largely the result of Burke's efforts.

After 1794 Burke lived in retirement. He refused a peerage, in favor of pensions amounting to £3700, and defended his choice in his famous *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1795). Failing rapidly in health, he died on July 9, 1797, and was buried at Beaconsfield.

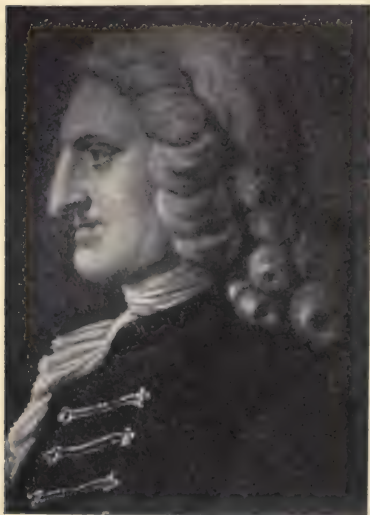
Works. As Addison's prose is sometimes called conversational, Burke's may be called oratorical. It needs to be read aloud for the best effect. The heavy monotony, however, which marked the rolling periods of inferior writers of his day is relieved by his vigorous phrases and sudden, short sentences. There is no better example of Burke's style at its best than his *Speech on Conciliation with America* (1775). Among such elaborate sentences as the following—"The voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence,"—we find the quick, brief words that drive the points home: "The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry";—"Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster";—"The people would occupy without grants";—"None will barter away the im-

mediate jewel of his soul";—"These are the cords of man";—"It gives the strong-box itself." In addition to this vigorous, vivid style, Burke brought vast knowledge and broad political wisdom to his works: "He knew how the whole world lived."

THE NOVEL.

The promise of *Sir Roger* and *Robinson Crusoe* came to fruition, about the middle of the eighteenth century, in the novels of SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761) and HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754). Mentioned together because they were the pioneers, no two men could be more dissimilar. Richardson was a gentle fat man, analytic and somewhat morbid, who owed his style to an extensive experience in writing love-letters for young ladies. Fielding was a hearty, out-of-doors man, often vulgar, but always robust, healthy, who owed his style to practical experience in writing plays and to the still more valuable experience of knowing how the world talked in all walks of life. Equally dissimilar are their novels. Richardson pictures a conflict of passions that is always governed by reflection and calculation. His men and women are too good or too bad — and always calculating. When they are good, moreover, it is too often in a sanctimonious, snuffing way. Fielding, in contrast, pictures for the most part ungoverned passions, often brutal, but sometimes noble; and his men and women are vividly real. Both writers take abundant pains to point the moral, sometimes to rub it in. Richardson, as might be supposed, extols the strength of a studied virtue; Fielding champions generosity, goodness

at bottom, as opposed to insincerity and the show of virtue. "The finest composition of human nature, as well as the finest china, may have a flaw in it; and this, I am afraid, in either case is equally incurable; though, nevertheless, the pattern may remain of the highest value." Richardson carries little interest beyond that of



HENRY FIELDING

being a pioneer, while Fielding, in creating real characters, is of perennial interest. Thackeray and Dickens are in the direct line of literary descent from Fielding.

Richardson was the first in the field, with his *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), a story developed by letters. Fielding, who had been a dramatist hitherto, set out to write a take-off on the

smug virtue of *Pamela*, but after a few chapters he got interested in the work, forgot Richardson, and produced *Joseph Andrews* (1742). Richardson wrote two other novels, *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). Fielding's greatest novel is *Tom Jones* (1749). His other two, *Jonathan Wild* (1743) and *Amelia* (1751) reveal his power of depicting real persons and real scenes, but the figure of

Squire Western in *Tom Jones* raises it above all his other work. A vigorous, intemperate, narrow-minded, but lovable old fellow, Squire Western *lives* more truly than any character of his kind between Falstaff and Mr. Pickwick. Ready to throw his daughter out of his house when he finds she is in love with the rascal Tom Jones, he cries out: "It's well for un I could not get at un: I'd a licked un. . . . He shan't ever have a morsel of meat of mine, or a varden to buy it. . . . If she will ha' un, one smock shall be her portion." But when he is reconciled to the match, his enthusiasm is as keen as his anger was, and a couple of years later he protests that "the tattling of his little granddaughter . . . is sweeter music than the finest cry of dogs in England."

Richardson and Fielding were followed by two novelists of distinction: TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT (1721-1771), who wrote realistic tales of adventure, particularly at sea, and LAURENCE STERNE (1713-1768), whose humor made one of his books immortal. *Humphrey Clinker* (1771) is Smollett's best-known novel, while *Tristram Shandy* (1767) is the chief cause of Sterne's fame. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1764), it should be remembered, further enriched the list of eighteenth century novels; and though the best work of the succeeding period was along other lines, the realistic style of Fielding again became popular in the next century.

THE RETURN TO NATURE (1770-1800).

The reaction against the formal life and literature of the eighteenth century began slowly, but it may be traced

back to the days of Pope. In fact, it was the natural course for Englishmen; the so-called classical age, dominant from Dryden to Johnson, was the artificial course. This reassertion of what was most natural to the English character implied a return to the great masters of literature before the days of Dryden and the French influence—to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton. Not the least result of this was a gradual breaking away from the tyranny of the heroic couplet; and though the main course of literature, under Johnson's leadership, followed the old form, the minor writers of the last half of the century realized the power of blank verse, Spenserian stanza, ballad measure, and four-foot couplets. As early as 1726 Thomson began to write his *Seasons* in blank verse; and his *Castle of Indolence* (1748) was in the long neglected Spenserian stanza. Another—in fact, the most obvious—feature of the reaction was a return to the open country. For a while this interest was gentle, rural; it remained for Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, in the next century, to delight in really wild nature, untouched by man; a country churchyard, “the sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,”—the nature revealed in the poetry of Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, and Cowper,—is the interest of the later eighteenth century. If it seems rather tame to us, in comparison to the storm-swept mountains of Byron's poetry, it was wholly different from the city life of Pope, with its elegant gentlemen at the coffee-house and its elegant ladies riding in sedan-chairs. It meant, moreover, solitude, reflection. Man began to consider not so much the life about him as the *life within him*; and if this phase of eighteenth century life gave

rise to a good deal of false sentiment and feeble melancholy, it gave rise, too, to a spiritual depth unknown in Pope: the proper study of mankind, it was gradually realized, was not man alone, in his little outward life, but man in relation to nature, to the universe, and to God. Finally, the reaction against the elegance of city life



STOKE POGES CHURCHYARD, THE SCENE OF GRAY'S "ELEGY"

meant a new interest in the "simple annals of the poor."

These main qualities of the reaction must not be too definitely separated from the old traditions, which lingered so strongly that Gray and Cowper belong as much to the passing as to the coming age. Nothing begins all of a sudden, but grows out of the very thing which it repudiates. Thus Goldsmith, friend of Johnson and skilful writer of heroic couplets, unwittingly allied himself with much that Johnson openly or tacitly condemned — a real

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fondness for nature and an interest in the life of the country poor. Still, all over Europe a new spirit of liberty was gathering force—to result in the French Revolution, in the overthrow not only of political kings, but of literary despots; to herald the age of democracy.¹

The chief literary fore-runners of the new movement were Gray, Cowper, and Burns.

THOMAS GRAY (1716–1771), a modest, scholarly man, wrote little. What he did write, moreover, received the careful polish of the poetry of his day. In his verses, however,—especially in his best verses, the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (1751)—he shows all the early characteristics of the reaction: a departure from the heroic couplet,² a love of rural nature —

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

a tendency to sad reflection, manifest throughout the poem; and genuine interest in lowly life —

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

¹ One must guard against the idea, however, that the reaction was sudden or even complete. An age has predominating tendencies, but is never only one thing at a time; it *grows* out of what precedes. Thus naturalness flourished to a great extent in the time of Pope, while artificiality was often in evidence during the hey-day of literary freedom.

² The poem is written in heroic verse, but riming alternately, not in couplets,—a form admirably suited to the dignified theme.

In addition, Gray shows in some of his other poems, such as *The Bard* and *An Ode From the Norse Tongue*, a then very unorthodox interest in the romantic Middle Ages. But this feature of the new movement did not gain great prominence till later, when it became so important that it gave its name to the age of Scott and Wordsworth; and even Gray, in spite of his fledgling interest, was actually frightened by the absurd horrors of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, an exaggerated imitation of Romantic novels.

In measuring Gray's significance in the new movement we must not lose sight of his merit — apart from any age. He bears the distinction of never having published anything poor; and the excellence of his few poems, especially of his great *Elegy*, has won him a high place among lovers of good poetry.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800) had so much respect for the genius of Pope that he felt it almost presumptuous to publish his blank-verse translation of Homer (1791), far better than Pope's version in heroic couplets. In Cowper's poetry, too, there is abundant evidence of his respect for the eighteenth century tradition. Nevertheless, he shows as clearly as Gray the growing inter-



WILLIAM COWPER

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ests of the new age. His love of the pleasant countryside about Weston Underwood is the most noticeable trait: his country scenes are described with intimacy and relish. One of his best pictures is that of a woodman and his dog:

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn till eve his solitary task.
Shaggy and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.

Cowper shows, too, like Gray, pensive melancholy and a love of solitude; while, more than Gray, he is aware of the defects of too much art: in the *Task* (1785), his best poem, he speaks of nature

Performing such inimitable feats
As she [Art] with all her rules can never reach.

Here is a direct contradiction of Pope's theory,

True art is nature to advantage drest,—

though one feels that Cowper, with his dignified restraint, only dimly realized the parting of the ways. Among his great contemporaries only one had the violent love of freedom which could break through all the restraints of the schools. "Bobbie" Burns, the Scottish plowman,

is the most positive example of the return to nature. With him poetry was not merely versified prose, but song. Though he died a year before Burke, his affinities are with Byron and Shelley : he was a full generation ahead of his time.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796).

In Burns we shall find almost none of the typical characteristics of the eighteenth century. This fact is partly due to his humble origin — on a remote country farm : he was not born, nor was he nurtured, in a literary circle. It is not surprising, therefore, to find him familiar with the Scottish landscape or with the simple country folk among whom he lived. His most outstanding quality, however, is a violent love of freedom. In his life it got him into all sorts of difficulties ; in his poetry it produced the fine burst of song which in its kind has never been equaled.



ROBERT BURNS

Life. Burns was born at Alloway, Ayrshire, on January 25, 1759. His early life was spent working for his

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father, a poor farmer. While still a boy Burns began to shine among his fellows, not only in feats of strength, but as the leading figure in a local debating club. A boon companion, however, he fell soon into idleness and drinking; and these two habits, coupled with an inability to resist the charms of nearly every lassie he met, played havoc with his farming. He stuck more or less resolutely to his plow, now at Lochlea, now at Mossgiel, finally at Ellisland, but never persistently enough to make a success of it. As excise officer in Dumfries he did no better, for he shut his eyes to the smuggling of his needy friends, and in verse and action insulted the government which gave him service. And his two visits to Edinburgh, when he was a literary lion, though they brought him temporary popularity, left him poor and indignant.

The first publication of Burns's poems, in 1786, included most of his longer pieces, such as *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *The Jolly Beggars*, as well as some of his best songs. The little book brought him immediate fame; he was persuaded to visit Edinburgh; and on the way, it is said, he found the country people singing his songs, while the guests at inns got out of bed to see him and hear him talk. With "manners direct from God," and with conversation that overflowed with wit, humor, and pathos, he charmed Edinburgh society. But he could not live on adulation alone; and though a second edition of his poems (1787) brought him £500, a second trip to the capital revealed to him that society soon tired of its playthings. Full of what he called his father's "stubborn ungainly integrity," he began to rail at rank and riches —

The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

This fierce independence of Burns showed itself again when he was excise officer in Dumfries. He sent confiscated cannon to aid the cause of the revolutionists in France, sat covered at the theater while *God Save the King* was sung, and once, when Pitt's health was pro-



BIRTHPLACE OF BURNS, ALLOWAY

posed, he called out, "Let us drink to the health of a greater and better man — George Washington."

The life in Dumfries, with its conviviality, was fatal to Burns. He went to pieces rapidly, dying July 21, 1796, in his thirty-seventh year.

In judging the character of Burns, we must make allowance, as Carlyle has pointed out, for the size of his orbit: that is, his deflections were relatively not so great as they would be for the ordinary man, with a small and clearly marked path to follow. Moreover, though we may rightly condemn his inconstancy, irreverence, and

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intemperance, we find our strongest impulse one of love and admiration—love for the man who had such a tender, human heart; and admiration for the poet who could sing such irresistible songs.

Works. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is probably the most famous of Burns's longer poems. It gives a pleasant picture of a simple country family, with its sturdy integrity and shrewd common sense—the kind of family that nurtured Burns. In *Tam O'Shanter*, which tells of the midnight witches that beset a luckless drinker, Burns gives us some of his best humor—lively, never forced, a humor that is saved from mere cleverness by its kinship with pathos. The poet's heart gets the better of him and of his readers too. Nowhere is this combination of humor and pathos better revealed than in his *Address to the Deil*:

An now, auld Cloots, I ken ye 're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin' ¹
 To your black pit;
But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',²
 An' cheat you yet.

It is in the Scottish dialect that Burns is at his best; his English verses are consciously literary and lifeless, but his native language is brimming with his lively nature, in such lines as:

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
 Gang aft a-gley; ³

and:

¹ tripping.

² darting.

³ Amiss.

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!

This naturalness is best seen in the *Songs* of Burns. In them all the humor, pathos, and melody of his nature found their highest expression. When he fell in love, he says, "rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart." It is this spontaneous language that is the charm of such poems as *Highland Mary*, *O my Luve's like a Red, Red Rose*, and *Bonnie Doon*; while his love of freedom broke out in such ringing songs as *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace Bled* and *A Man's a Man for a' that*. No one can come upon these poems for the first time; like the most popular of Burns's songs, *Auld Lang Syne*, they seem to have been always familiar — part of the language. We read Burns not so much to discover something new, as to recall old friends, songs that sing themselves in our hearts. Let us read a short one together:

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June.
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luv am I:
And I will luv thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luv thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
 And fare thee weel awhile!
 And I will come again, my Luve,
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Now let us think back to the elegant verses of Pope, to the trim gardens and the repressed emotions of the polished poets of the eighteenth century. Clearly new forces are at work; English song has come to its own again. We must recognize, however, while we welcome the song, that the spirit of freedom which produced it brought on, also, a confusion, a lack of the lucidity which was the strength of the eighteenth century.

CONCLUSION.

The literature of the eighteenth century is not popular to-day, especially among boys and girls. Our life is set to a different tune from that of the city gentleman of the days of Queen Anne and the Georges. We must not forget, however, if the thought of the time seems trivial and the emotion repressed, that a surprising number of men in the eighteenth century attained to a serenity that is our despair. We may learn a lesson from quiet pools



BURNS MONUMENT, EDINBURGH

as well as from the storm-beaten sea. It was something of this pellucid serenity, moreover, that got into the clear prose style of the eighteenth century and became the invaluable inheritance of Macaulay, Thackeray, and Arnold in the next century. Just as we shall not understand, or greatly enjoy, the poetry of the nineteenth century unless we have a knowledge of Shakespeare and Milton, so, lacking familiarity with Addison and Burke, we shall be deaf to the best part of nineteenth century prose.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1702-1714	QUEEN ANNE	JONATHAN SWIFT, 1667-1745	Cadenus & Vanessa	Gulliver's Travels
1704	Battle of Blenheim	Richard Steele, 1672-1729		The Tatler
1707	Union of England with Scotland	JOSEPH ADDISON, 1672-1719 ALEXANDER POPE, 1688-1744	The Campaign The Essay on Man	The Spectator
1714-1727	GEORGE I The Old Pretender	Matthew Prior, 1664-1721	Alma	
1715	Septennial Act	John Gay, 1685-1732	The Beggars' Opera	
1721-42	Robert Walpole, first "Prime Minister"	DANIEL DEFOE, 1661-1731	Hymn to the Pil-lory	Robinson Crusoe
1727-1760	GEORGE II The Young Pretender	Edward Young, 1681-1765	Night Thoughts	
1745	Seven Years' War	James Thomson, 1700-1748	Seasons	Clarissa Harlowe
1756-1763	Wolfe Captures Quebec	Samuel Richardson, 1689-1761		Tom Jones
1759	GEORGE III The Stamp Act	HENRY FIELDING, 170/-1754 Lawrence Sterne, 1713-1768		Tristram Shandy
1760-1820	Ministry of Lord North	Tobias Smollett, 1721-1771	Vanity of Human Wishes	Humphrey Clinker
1765		SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1709-1784		Lives of the Poets
1770-1782				

CHRONOLOGY — (Continued)

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1775-1783	The American Revolution	David Garrick, 1717-1779		The Clandestine Marriage
1780	No-Popery Riots	OLIVER GOLDSMITH, 1728-1774	Deserted Village	Vicar of Wakefield
1789-1799	The French Revolution	EDMUND BURKE, 1729-1797		Speech on Conciliation
1798	The Battle of the Nile	Horace Walpole, 1717-1797		Letters
		Edward Gibbon, 1737-1794		Roman Empire
		James Roswell, 1740-1795		Life of Johnson
		Thomas Gray, 1716-1771	Elegy	
		Thomas Percy, 1729-1811	Reliques	
		William Cowper, 1731-1800	The Task	
		R. B. Sheridan, 1751-1816		
		Fanny Burney, 1752-1840	Poems	The Rivals
		Thomas Chatterton, 1752-1770		Cecilia
		William Blake, 1757-1827	Poems	
		ROBERT BURNS, 1759-1796	Cotter's Saturday Night	

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

LITERATURE. SWIFT. The best short life is by Leslie Stephen (English Men of Letters Series). The complete *works* are published in 12 vols. by Bohn. GULLIVER'S TRAVELS is published in the *Temple Classics* (Dent); also in numerous cheap school editions. A valuable contribution to Swift criticism is an article by A. S. Hill, in the *North American Review* for 1868.

ADDISON. Life, by Courthope (English Men of Letters Series). See also Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*. A good edition of the SPECTATOR is that, in 8 vols., published by Scribner. The SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY PAPERS and other SPECTATOR Essays are given in many cheap school editions. The Complete Works are published, in 6 vols., by Macmillan.

STEELE. There are good selections from Steele, including his best TATLER and SPECTATOR essays, in the *Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn).

POPE. Life by Leslie Stephen (English Men of Letters Series). The *Poetical Works*, ed. by Ward, are published in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan). THE RAPE OF THE LOCK and THE EPISTLE TO ARBUTHNOT are published together in the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton Mifflin).

DEFOE. Life by Minto (English Men of Letters Series). *Chief Earlier Works*, ed. by Morley, is published by Routledge. THE JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE is published in the *Temple Classics* (Dent); a convenient, cheap edition of ROBINSON CRUSOE is published in *Everyman's Library*.

FIELDING. Life by Dobson (English Men of Letters Series). JOSEPH ANDREWS and TOM JONES are published in the Bohn Library; TOM JONES also, in 2 vols., in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton).

SMOLLETT'S HUMPHREY CLINKER is published by Bohn, and

STERNE'S *TRISTRAM SHANDY* by Dent (in the *Temple Classics*); also in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton).

JOHNSON. The great biography of Johnson is Boswell's, ed. by Hill (Clarendon Press). An excellent short account is Macaulay's *Essay on Johnson* (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). Good *Selections* from Johnson's works are published by the Clarendon Press.

GOLDSMITH. Irving's *Life of Goldsmith* (Putnam) is good and very entertaining. See also Macaulay's *Essay on Goldsmith*. Goldsmith's *Works* are published in 5 vols. by Bohn. A good selection of his poems is published by the American Book Co.; *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER* in Cassell's *National Library*; *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD* by Longmans, and in numerous school editions.

BURKE. There are numerous cheap editions of Burke's *SPEECH ON CONCILIATION*. GRAY's *Poetical Works* are published in the *Aldine Poets* (Macmillan); the *ELEGY* is included in practically all collections of English poetry. A good cheap edition of SHERIDAN's plays is that in the *Camelot Series* (Scott). COWPER's *Poetical Works* are published in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan); his *Letters*, ed. by Benham, are published by Macmillan; *THE TASK* is published in the *Temple Classics* (Dent); and a very good selection of his verse is given in the *Golden Treasury Series* (Macmillan). The most useful life is by Goldwin Smith (*English Men of Letters Series*).

BURNS. Life by Shairp (*English Men of Letters Series*). See also Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* (numerous cheap editions), and Stevenson's *Some Aspects of Robert Burns* in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (Scribner). The *Complete Works and Letters* are published in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan). There are numerous cheap volumes of selected poems.

Of the minor writers of the eighteenth century Ward's *English Poets*, 4 vols. (Macmillan), and Craik's *English Prose*, 5 vols. (Macmillan), give good examples. *Century Readings* (Century) gives a good selection of both prose and verse in one volume.

SUGGESTED READINGS.

Swift's *BATTLE OF THE BOOKS* and *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, Addison's *CAMPAIGN* and *SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY PAPERS*, Pope's *UNIVERSAL PRAYER*, *DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL*, *RAPE OF THE LOCK*, and *EPISTLE TO ARBUTHNOT*, and Defoe's *ROBINSON CRUSOE* form a representative selection of early 18th century literature. The second half of the century is fairly well covered by Fielding's *TOM JONES*, Smollett's *HUMPHREY CLINKER*, Sterne's *TRISTRAM SHANDY*, Johnson's *LETTER TO CHESTERFIELD*, *VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES*, and *LIFE OF POPE*, Goldsmith's *DESERTED VILLAGE*, *VICAR OF WAKEFIELD*, and *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*, Burke's *SPEECH ON CONCILIATION*, Sheridan's *RIVALS*, Gray's *ELEGY*, Cowper's *TASK* and a few selected poems, and Burns's *COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT*, *TAM O' SHANTER*, and selections from the shorter poems and songs. Even for a beginning, however, one should read also selections from Boswell's *LIFE OF JOHNSON* and such further selections, especially from Prior, Gay, Young, Thomson, Chatterton, Gibbon, and Blake, as are included in the *Century Readings*.

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (Appleton), is the authority. Good shorter histories are Morris' *The Age of Queen Anne* and *The Early Hanoverians* (Epochs of Modern History). Thackeray's *Four Georges* and *English Humourists*, though they are at times more sentimental than just, give very interesting pictures of the century. See also Gosse, *Eighteenth Century Literature* (Macmillan) and Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement* (Ginn). For other works dealing with the literary history see special chapters in books given on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. A great many novels help us to understand the eighteenth century. Besides those actually written at the time, such as *Tom Jones* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, we have, among the best, Scott's *Rob Roy*, *The Heart*

of *Midlothian*, *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *Redgauntlet*, Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* and *The Virginians*, Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, Reade's *Peg Woffington*, Lever's *Treasure Trove*, and Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*. Southey's *Blenheim* and Campbell's *Lochiel* are poems connected with familiar eighteenth century events.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AGE OF ROMANTICISM

(1790-1835).

“Romanticism” is the word now generally used to describe the period which coincides roughly with the early nineteenth century. Like other names which attempt to cover a time of great diversity, it is not entirely satisfactory. To understand Scott, Wordsworth, and their contemporaries, therefore, it is necessary to realize that, as a special name applied to a particular age, Romanticism may and does include a good deal that is not *romantic*.

Romantic, in literature, means merely that in a given piece of writing imagination is the most noticeable trait; as *realistic* implies a predominating sense of fact and *classic* an outstanding sense of form.¹ Now it is obvious that any great piece of writing must have a goodly portion of each of these three qualities, that in the works of Scott, Wordsworth, and Keats there is not only imagination, but sufficient sense of fact and sense of form; in short, that no age is wholly romantic, realistic, or classic. The time of Scott, however, like the Middle Age of Romance and like the Age of Elizabeth, was a period when sense of fact and sense of form were subordinated to imagination. In extreme cases of this we

¹ See a clear emphasis of this distinction in *The Essentials of Poetry*, by W. A. Neilson, Houghton Mifflin Company.

get what has been called "Romanticism run mad," as in Blake's lines —

And if the babe is born a boy,
He's given to a woman old,
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.

But in the better instances, when the writer has sufficient regard for fact and form, we get some of the best poetry in our language, such as Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve*, or, to quote from Blake at his best,—

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

In calling the age one of imagination and poetry, however, as the preceding century was one of reason and prose, we must not lose sight of the fact that such poems as Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* are less romantic than Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* or that Keats had as keen a sense of form as Dryden and Pope.

This characteristic of superabundant imagination was in most instances the result of a revival of interest in the story, song, and ballad of the past. It is the most outstanding feature of the Age of Romanticism and has given the period its name. It often gave rise, especially in the poets, to a tendency to introspection and to what Keats called "a horrid morbidity." Imagination often got the better of reason. There are, however, many other striking features, some of them not at all romantic, so that the word *Romanticism*, as applied to the fifty

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years between the death of Johnson and the death of Scott, has come to mean a special thing. The movement has been variously defined — as “a Revival of the Middle Ages,” “the Age of Revolution,”—but these definitions emphasize only particular features. It will be best, at present, not to attempt a comprehensive definition, but rather to note the most striking characteristics.

1. *Revival of interest in the Age of Romance.* This is the most noticeable feature of the time. It does not appear directly in all the writers; in fact, Shelley positively hated what he considered the superstitious past; but the result to which it contributed, lively imagination, love of the picturesque, freedom from narrow restraint, is everywhere noticeable. The first signs of this new interest appear, like the return to nature, back in the days of Johnson. Bishop Percy, in collecting old ballads, and Macpherson, in forging in his *Ossian* what he pretended was a translation from old Celtic literature, were among the pioneers; and though the one received the ridicule and the other the contempt of Dr. Johnson, by the last quarter of the century the revival of romance was beginning to be something like universal. It appears most obviously in the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, with their extravagant titles, such as *The Mysteries of Udolfo*. Scott's translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, a most romantic poem, appeared in 1796 and Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*¹ in 1798. By then the victory over the so-called classicism of Pope and Johnson was won.

¹ Neither a revival nor an imitation of the Middle Age poetry, the *Ancient Mariner* abounds in the mysterious and supernatural features which Middle Age poets used; in addition, it is written in “ballad stanza.”

The other main features of the new age have already been noticed in the beginning of the Romantic Movement under Gray, Cowper, and Burns. By the turn of the century, however, poetry reached a development which makes Gray and Cowper seem almost wholly classical. In this development, moreover, it took on features not obvious in the work of the earlier men.

2. *The Return to Nature.* Influenced by the interest in romance, men came more and more to seek out strange and wild scenery. The beauty of rural England still attracted them, but now we find Coleridge fascinated by mysterious forests; Wordsworth by mountain scenes —

Huge and living forms, that do not live
Like living men;

Shelley by the shapes of sea and sky; Byron by the ocean,

Dread, fathomless, alone;

and Keats by “an elfin storm from faeryland.” With Wordsworth, moreover, began an entirely new feeling towards nature: a setting for the poetry of Cowper and Burns, nature became with Wordsworth a personality, a prophet.

3. *Interest in Humanity.* The French Revolution, coming in the last decade of the eighteenth century, fanned the human sympathy of poets into an ardent flame. Some of the poets — notably Scott and Keats — were unaffected by the great effort to establish the rights of man, but those who caught the message were eager champions of the new Democracy. Wordsworth cried,

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven! —

Byron wrote, "The king-times are fast finishing! There will be blood shed like water, and tears like mist, but the peoples will conquer in the end;" — Coleridge planned an ideal community, to be founded in America; — and Shelley dreamed of a Utopian society, free from bigotry and tyranny. But there was more in the movement than the visions of poets and philosophers. There was a Europe-wide awakening, the practical result of which in England was the Reform Bill of 1832, while the whole nineteenth century, socially, politically, religiously, was quickened anew by the Revolution.

4. *Verse-Form.* It should be noted, too, that the escape from the tyranny of the heroic couplet was complete. In a singularly poetic age, meters of nearly every description were handled with a skill that has rarely been surpassed. And if some writers — Shelley and Byron, for instance — were too careless at times, Keats at least rivaled Pope in the careful construction of his lines. Little can distinguish the two periods better — the day of Pope and the day of Keats — than a comparison of their handling of the heroic couplet. Pope's neatly balanced, "closed" couplet we remember:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blest.

Now compare Keats's *Endymion*:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never

Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

There is rarely any suspicion that Pope might have written good lyrical verse or good blank verse; but in the mere form of these lines from *Endymion* there is excellent promise of such verse as Keats wrote in the *Ode to a Nightingale* and in *Hyperion*.

It is not merely that Keats was the better poet — in many ways he was not; it is rather that the Romanticists, whether in interest or verse-form, were never controlled by one narrow convention. Perhaps we cannot find a better definition of the age than Victor Hugo's — "Liberalism in Literature."

WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832).

Scott loved the song and story of the past; he loved the great out-of-doors; his heart entered into whatever he wrote; and he left the world a body of prose and poetry which has justly earned for him the name of "The Great Romancer." One has only to turn to the stirring chase in *The Lady of the Lake*, to the storming of Front-de-Bœuf's castle in *Ivanhoe*, or to the swinging, audacious measure of *The Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee* to realize that here the author is clear of formal restrictions, that life, not literary convention, was the inspiration of this man.

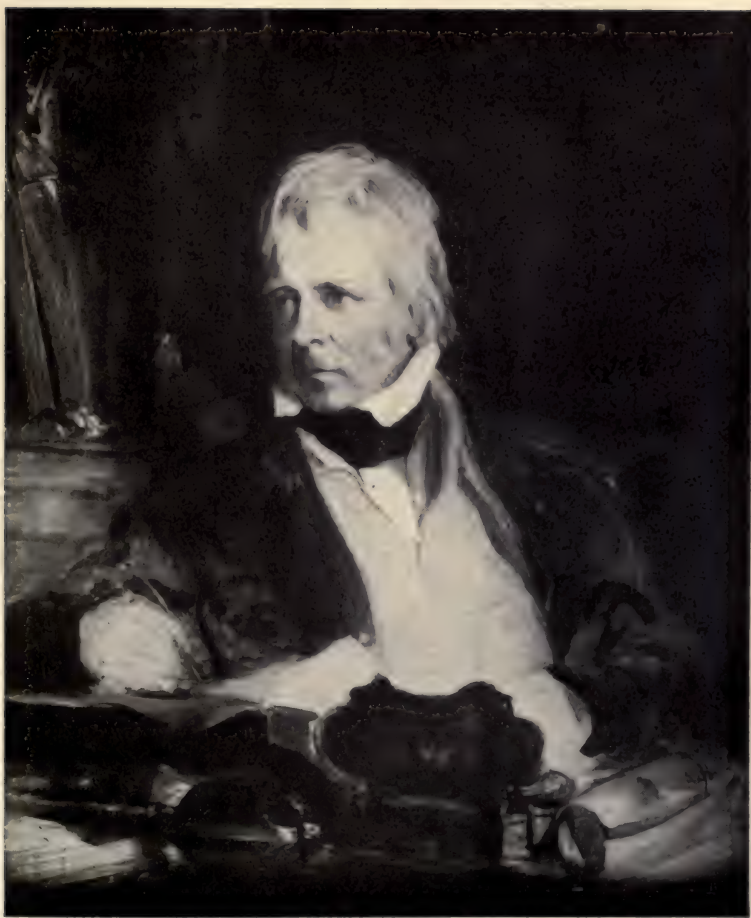
Life. Scott was born at Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. His childhood is significant. Robust though he was, a severe illness when he was a baby left him lame for life, and it was on account of this illness that he was

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sent to his grandfather's place at Sandy-Knowe. Here, not far from "Tweed's fair flood," he rode a Shetland pony over the moors; here he gained his first interest in Border story and song; and here again, when he was a young man, deputy-sheriff of Selkirkshire, he rode about the country, gathering fragments of old ballads from the lips of peasants and cherishing his love of nature and of the magic past.

Bright but erratic at school—"an incorrigibly idle imp," he says of himself, who "glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other," Scott passed on through the regular routine at Edinburgh High School and Edinburgh University, till in 1792 he was admitted to the bar. For a time he worked at the law and, indeed, became in 1806 a clerk of session; but the interest of his boyhood, nature and tales of chivalry, remained his chief interest, and what time could be snatched from his profession was spent in wide and various reading. In fact, when he moved to Lasswade soon after his marriage, in 1797, he was feeling his way back from what he called a "dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances" to the open country of his boyhood.

The romantic nature which early revealed itself in the "inexhaustible tales" of Scott's boyhood first received literary expression in 1796, when he translated Bürger's ballad, *Lenore*. In 1802 he brought out a great collection of songs and ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. From then on his pen was rarely idle; no writer of his time, unless perhaps Byron, had such a flow of language. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in 1805,



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SIR WALTER SCOTT

From a painting by Sir Edwin Landseer



brought great popularity; and *Marmion* (1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) made him the best-known writer in the United Kingdom. He is said, indeed, by the interest aroused in the Trossachs and "lone Glenartney's hazel shade," to have affected materially the revenue from the post-horse duty.

After his success with *The Lady of the Lake* Scott continued for some years to pour forth stirring narrative poems, such as *Rokeby* (1812) and *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), but Byron's greater successes in the same field attracted popular attention; whereat Scott, with his head still full of "inexhaustible tales," turned his hand to prose fiction and not only eclipsed his former fame, but nearly wrote poetry out of fashion; at least, since the *Waverley* novels appeared, verse has been unable to contend successfully with prose for the favor of the reading public. Scott had already had much experience in writing prose when he began his career as a novelist. His *Dryden* (1808) and *Swift* (1814) still retain their value as careful and discerning biography, and their author had found time as well for many short articles contributed to magazines, especially to the *Tory Quarterly Review*. In 1814, while looking one day for some fishing-tackle, he came upon an old, unfinished manuscript. This he completed in five weeks, and *Waverley* was the result. It gained immediate success and was quickly followed by the great number of novels which have found their way into the homes and hearts of English-speaking peoples all over the world. These books were at first chiefly Scottish — such as *Rob Roy* (1818) and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818),— but later the

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English *Ivanhoe* (1820) and *Kenilworth* (1821), the French *Quentin Durward* (1823), and *The Talisman* (1825), much of it laid in the Holy Land, showed that Scott was not dependent on his native heath for his lore. Anything that promised high adventure and devotion was fit subject for his ready pen.

Scott's writings brought him money as well as fame;



ABBOTSFORD

he liked to live on a large scale; and he moved in 1804 to Ashestiel on the Tweed, and in 1812, with increasing prosperity, to Abbotsford, five miles down the river, where he built himself a great and now famous house.

Here he was known as the hospitable "Laird of Abbotsford," a pattern of kind master and generous friend, an incarnation of the great-hearted gentlemen who live in the pages of his books; and here, after a life of brilliant literary activity, unprecedented success, and sad financial failure, he died on September 21, 1832.

The last chapter of Scott's life is important. Since it reveals particularly what manner of man he was, we shall thereby be better able to understand the large-heartedness of his writings. In 1826, while he was working on *Woodstock*, Constable, his publisher, and the Ballantynes, his printers, failed completely. Though Scott was only a "silent partner," he at once generously assumed the whole debt, £130,000. "Give me my

popularity," he said, "and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years." He wrote with prodigious vigor; "I remember," he says, "writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval for either food or rest;" and now he turned with the same vigor to his work. But the task was too great. His *Life of Napoleon* (1827) had a phenomenal success, and altogether before his death he wrote off about £40,000 of the debt. Kind friends deceived him at the last into thinking that he had accomplished the whole task; and, indeed, the sale of his works, a few years later, did pay off the entire sum.

The important thing to note, however, is not just how much Scott accomplished, but the fact that he did all that he could; and the further fact that not only friends, but servants, and even creditors stood by him in the hour of his trial. He had perhaps lived extravagantly; Abbotsford has been called his "private Moscow expedition;" but when the need came, he was able to renounce the things he had so dearly loved for what he held in greater esteem, his honor. Such an act, however, was not remarkable in Scott, when we consider his ideals, manifest in his books. As in his writings it is the heart that counts, so in his life he instinctively set honor, love, courtesy, above all else. He wrote true romance; and, as he had always lived true romance, he stepped easily, by natural right as it were, into a heroic and romantic endeavor. "The gentleman," said Lockhart, his son-in-law and biographer,— "the gentleman survived the genius." Yet in a sense the two were the same thing in Scott; and to understand the gentleman is to understand the genius.

Works. Scott's character pervaded his writings. Both his best verse and his best prose reveal his love of chivalry and out-of-doors. Every boy knows *The Lady of the Lake*, with its "fair dames and crested chiefs," its "clanging hoof and horn," its mustering of the clan, its vivid combat between James and Roderick, when "in dubious strife they darkly closed," and its fine romantic ending when Snowdon's knight binds the lovers with his chain of gold. To know and understand these scenes and the fresh, unhampered poetry in which they are expressed is to understand, beyond the need of analysis, the essence of Scott's Romanticism. Read again the passage beginning

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,

or the melodious song,

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er;

and the secret of Scott's "magic wand" reveals itself. This is true not only of *The Lady of the Lake*, but of *Marmion*, of Scott's other poems, and, in spirit, of his novels. It is the "wandering witch-note," the "seraph bold, with touch of fire," the "brush of Fairy's frolic wing,"—the magic of the "Harp of the North."

But there is more in Scott's Romanticism than the "wandering witch-note;" there is something very substantial, very solid about it, especially in his novels. Instead of vainglorious knights and impossible ladies, he pictures for us individuals, as real and vivid as persons whom we know. The point is well illustrated by the answer of a schoolboy when he was asked why Captain

Silver in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* seemed so real, in contrast to the dagger-bristling heroes of forgotten books. He replied aptly enough that Captain Silver does real things; and when a scornful friend remarked, "You never do the things Silver does," the first boy, sticking to his point, replied, "No, but if you were Captain Silver



ELLEN'S ISLE, LOCH KATRINE

you would." The same thing is true of Scott's characters, at least of the men: they live in an atmosphere unfamiliar to us; they figure a sort of gigantic and fabulous heroism; but through it all they move like human beings;—they do what you or I would do if we were Front-de-Boeuf or King Richard or Isaac the Jew. As Mr. Chesterton has well put it, true romance lies not in a "multiplicity of drawn swords," but in actual living; it goes deeper than mere incidents and accidents; it is "a state of the soul." It was Scott's sense of fact, coupled with his lively imagination, which made him able to conjure up for us as no one else has done a life which

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we have not actually seen and yet believe to be true. "Perhaps the most profoundly thrilling of all Scott's situations is that in which the family of Colonel Man-nering are waiting for the carriage which may or may not arrive by night to bring an unknown man into a princely possession. Yet almost the whole of that thrilling scene consists of a ridiculous conversation about food, and flirtation between a frivolous old lawyer and a fashionable girl. We can say nothing about what makes these scenes, except that the wind bloweth where it listeth, and that here the wind blows strong." ¹

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850).

Wordsworth, more than any of his contemporaries, was the poet of nature. He literally grew up with it, apart from boys and men; and when in his manhood he came to a deep interest in his fellow-creatures, he still connected human life with "the round ocean and the living air;" in the "babbling Wye" he heard

The still sad music of humanity.

From his earliest years Wordsworth considered himself,

Else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit,

and the seriousness with which he took his high calling, to interpret nature and human life, developed in him a "prophetic strain." A great admirer of that other dedicated spirit, Milton, he reminds us constantly in the lofti-

¹ From "Sir Walter Scott" in *Varied Types*, by G. K. Chesterton.



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

After a sketch from life by Wyon, made April 21, 1847

ness of his ideals and in the dignity of his poetry of the great prophet of Puritanism.

Such "high seriousness" naturally sets a poet apart from the workaday world. *We* are moving about in a realm of fact; *he* is "moving about in worlds not realized." And the consequence is, with great loss to us, that we do not easily understand him. Our gross ears require purging, as it were, before we can hear his celestial harmonies. It is true that the best of Wordsworth's poetry can be put in a small volume and that what is excellent is obscured by a great deal that is inferior; but even this excellent little the great mass of readers do not understand without a sort of initiation, a preparation for communion with nature.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove:
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

If the reader of Wordsworth has never lifted up his eyes unto the hills, he will not be likely to appreciate the "impulses of deeper birth" of which the poet sings.

Life. Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in the village of Cockermouth, in the northwest corner of England. Educated at Hawkshead, a tiny village among the neighboring mountains, he grew up amid wild and magnificent scenery.

Though a capable student, he was a dreamy boy, and much of his education as well as his companionship came from the open hillsides where he roamed. To him mountain and star took on a sort of animation — though not that of human beings, but a supernatural life: they

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Moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams ;

and

the earth
And common face of nature spake to him
Rememberable things.

So great indeed was Wordsworth's absorption in the spirit of the universe that he passed through Cambridge



"STRIDING EDGE," HELVELLYN

University in a sort of haze and, on visiting France in 1791, took at first no interest in the Revolution.

It was through the Revolution, however, that Wordsworth's eyes were finally opened. He says that he first caught the full import of the great movement when, at Orleans, he saw a "hunger-bitten girl" leading a heifer. Immediately his ardor for the Republican cause knew no bounds, and friends were only just able to restrain

him from joining the ranks in France. On his return to England, moreover, everything seemed changed: he could no longer dwell apart with his beloved nature; the suffering of humanity called him to London. What made the situation worse, the experiment in France, as the years passed, seemed to be proving a failure; and the beautiful philosophy of the Revolutionists led straight into atheism. Wordsworth, to whom immortality was

A presence which is not to be put by,

was thrown into confusion and despair. Gradually, however, he saw his way through the problem; he began increasingly to realize that the whole question of man and nature was one; he was filled by

a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.

These lines were written in 1798, during a visit to Tintern Abbey. The following year he returned to his well-loved Lake District; and there, first at Grasmere, after 1813 at Rydal Mount, he spent the rest of his days, interpreting the simple life about him, inspiring men to simple faith "in common things that round us lie," teaching them of that

primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be.

Before this conversion, as it may be called, Wordsworth had already written a good deal of poetry. For some years he had been a close friend of Coleridge, and



DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE

together in 1798 they published their *Lyrical Ballads*. This volume contained some of Wordsworth's best early verses, as well as Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

Wordsworth's best work, however, was written during the sixteen years after 1798, when he was full of the message inspired by his vision. To these years belong his best lyrics and sonnets, *Michael*, *Resolution and Independence*, the *Ode to Duty*, the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, *Laodamia*, and *Dion*. Besides these were two long poems, *The Prelude* (1805) and *The Excursion* (1814), intended as parts of a longer work, *The Recluse*, which he never finished. This poem was to be a kind of spiritual autobiography, and from the parts that were written we get our chief knowledge of the development of Wordsworth's thought.

Wordsworth was never rich, but two small legacies,

together with his salary as distributor of stamps for Westmoreland, and later a pension from the civil list, enabled him to give his whole life to poetry. He continued to write much, and in 1843 succeeded Southey as poet-laureate. Little of his later work, however, except the *Duddon Sonnets* (1820) and a few scattered poems, is of his best. In his last years, nevertheless, he became a venerable figure among literary men—"a right good old steel-gray figure, with rustic simplicity and dignity about him." At the age of eighty he died on April 23, 1850, the anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Works. Before discussing the poetry of Wordsworth, it is well to remind ourselves of his theory of poetry, as set forth in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*. He held that any subject taken from life was a fit subject for poetry, and that the language should strive to follow, not literary tradition, but "the language of men." That Wordsworth did not adhere strictly to this theory is evident enough; on the other hand, he adhered to it much too strictly, with the result that absurd and trivial poems abound in his works. This quest, however, for "the common things that round us lie" led him to understand, more deeply even than Burns, the life of simple country folk; and the attempt to interpret such life in simple, "real" language often resulted in his best work.

As might be expected, Wordsworth's longer poems are often prosaic and tedious. But though Jeffrey was in the main right when he said of *The Excursion*, "This will never do," there are passages in it, as in *The Prelude*, which show well the power of the poet's descrip-

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tive verse. Take, for example, the picture of "The Solitary's" mountain abode at Blea Tarn:

Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close;
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!

The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighboring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

It is in the shorter poems, however, that Wordsworth is at his best. Whether in little lyrics that



A FIELD OF DAFFODILS NEAR RYDAL MOUNT

remind one of the wild flowers the poet knew so well, or in more ambitious poems, like the *Ode to Duty*, there are everywhere lines that "startle and waylay." More than this, there is the pervasive presence of uplifting and chastening thoughts. *The Solitary Reaper*, singing

As if her song could have no ending,

fills Wordsworth with a kind of noble rapture, till he concludes:

The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more; —

watching the skylark in its "privacy of glorious light," he cries:

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home! —

hearing the "two-fold shout" of the cuckoo, he writes:

O blessed bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee! —

standing on Westminster Bridge in the early morning, he says:

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will;
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

It is in such verses as these, in ennobling thoughts "on

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man, on nature, and on human life," that we see the true Wordsworth. His great *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* will repay special study, for in it he writes not only with the simple power of his best verse, but he reveals, in short compass, the very center of his vision.

The poet begins with an apparent regret that "the earth and every common sight" no longer seem "apparelled in celestial light" and puts himself the question:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

He then proceeds to explain that

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,

that we come trailing clouds of glory

From God, who is our home;

but that as we grow older "shades of the prison-house" of earth shut us in, till with the man "the vision splendid" fades into the light of common day. Then comes the great answer, the answer of Wordsworth's own life, that, in spite of dead custom,

Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life,

there may persist, even in the man, "shadowy recollections," "obstinate questionings," "high instincts;" while now we are better able than the child to understand

the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet.

More than that: the sight is not merely beautiful, but earnest —

The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
the poet concludes,

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834).

Coleridge, together with Southey and Wordsworth, belonged to the group of poets who made up the so-called "Lake School." But it is an unsatisfactory term, for, though these poets and others of less note were vaguely associated in the minds of hostile critics, there was no common doctrine or principle of the "Lake School;" and Coleridge's intimate connection with Wordsworth came be-



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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fore the residence of the former at Keswick and the latter at Grasmere.

Unlike Wordsworth, simple and serene, Coleridge was all his life a most "perturbed spirit." His natural dis-



CHRIST HOSPITAL

position to dreaming he aided by the use of opium; and the habit eventually broke down his energy. A great thinker, however, he contributed much to the thought of his time; and in his old age, when with the help of friends he managed to control the opium habit, he emerged into the "sage of Highgate" — "an archangel slightly damaged," as Lamb put it, but still able to stimulate the thinking men of his day. His life presents at times a sorry picture of vagueness and irresolution, but it reveals, too, a power of vision that was second only to DeQuincey's and a sheer weight of intellect that was second to none.

Life. Coleridge, the youngest of thirteen children, was born October 21, 1772, at Ottery St. Mary's, in Devonshire. His father was a poor clergyman, and the boy was sent at the age of ten to a charity school, Christ Hospital, in London. Already a "queer" small boy — a *character* before he was eight, he

says of himself — Coleridge impressed his schoolfellow Lamb as a “Logician, Metaphysician, Bard,” the “*inspired charity boy*.” A brilliant scholar, Coleridge won an “Exhibition Scholarship” at Jesus College, Cambridge, and entered the University in 1791. After an irregular attendance, he left Cambridge in 1794 and joined a group of young men, among them Southey, with the purpose of embarking for America and there founding an ideal community. Coleridge and Southey lectured and wrote to procure funds, but disagreements arose, and the party never started. For one reason, Southey married and soon began to take a new view of the scheme. A year later Coleridge himself married Sarah Fricker, the sister of Southey’s wife. It was now (1796) that *The Watchman*, a periodical which he issued for ten weeks, brought him before the reading public as a Unitarian, a revolutionist in religion as well as in politics. Gifted with almost miraculous powers of speech, he went about the country preaching as a “hireless volunteer” and was a veritable magnet to the young men who heard him.

Much the most important happening in these early years was the meeting with Wordsworth, in 1797, and the joint composition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge’s contribution, was started by the two friends to pay the expenses of a walking tour in Devon, but the poem grew till practically all of it was Coleridge’s; and, though it was not popular at first, it is now recognized as one of the greatest works of the age. Between 1797 and 1802, in fact, Coleridge was at the height of his powers. He wrote *Osorio*, a

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play produced many years later as *Remorse*; *Christabel* (never finished), the *Ode to France*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Fears in Solitude*, the *Hymn to Sunrise*, and, after an opium dream, the magnificent fragment *Kubla Khan*. In addition he translated Schiller's trilogy, *Wallenstein*, and wrote political articles for *The Morning Post* and *The Courier*.

By the time he was thirty, however, Coleridge succumbed to indolence. Long before he began to take opium, he recognized his predisposition to sloth —

Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my graspless hand¹
Drop Friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.

In 1800 he moved to Keswick, where his family and Southey's attempted to share one house, but within two years Coleridge, now taking enormous doses of laudanum, began to shun the Keswick household, and after 1812 he never lived with his family. He talked much of a great work on Christianity, but at this time he wrote practically nothing.

It was in 1816, when he began to live with Dr. Gillman, in Highgate, that Coleridge "emerged" as the "dusky sublime character" later visited by the young Carlyle. Gillman restricted the doses of opium, and Coleridge half-regained his old powers. He wrote little, but his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a rambling history of his thought, his *Lay Sermons* (1817), and his *Aids to Reflection* (1825) were books of great value to the young men who gathered round him at Highgate. It was chiefly as a talker that he was now known. As

¹ Written in 1794.

a lecturer he had already a great reputation; and his lectures on Shakespeare, given in 1812, are among the chief contributions to the criticism of the great dramatist. His philosophy of life, however,—so priceless to his disciples,—he never formulated into a coherent scheme. The reason why may be well understood from Carlyle's description of his conversation: "He began anywhere; you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation; instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards an answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers, and other precautionary and vehiculatary gear for setting out; perhaps did at last get under way—but was swiftly solicited, turned aside by the flame of some radiant new game on this hand or on that into new courses, and ever into new." It must have been necessary to hear him, to see the spirit in his eyes, in order to appreciate what the young men saw in him—"a kind of Magus, girt in mystery and enigma." When he died on July 25, 1834, old as well as young felt that they had lost a "great spirit."

Works. In his poetry Coleridge was very much of a Romanticist. On account of his share in the *Lyrical Ballads* he was counted an innovator; and though he later made it plain that he did not agree entirely with Wordsworth's theories, he broke completely with the theory and practice of Pope: indeed, it was he who recalled men to the fact that, in English verse, stress is more important than quantity, that to *count syllables* is altogether wrong. In his own practice, moreover, he carried out his theory; and with an exquisite ear for

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meter, he wrote in the *Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* lines which prove his point beyond a doubt. Perhaps no other man of his day is so successfully Romantic in verse-form.

Coleridge was no less true to his time in other ways. An ardent supporter of the French Revolution, he felt the call of brotherhood so strongly that he wrote in his *Lines to a Young Ass*¹

I hail thee Brother — spite of the fool's scorn!
And fain would take thee with me, in the Dell
Of Peace and mild Equality to dwell.

But, like Wordsworth, Coleridge later recanted when he saw the champions in France

Mix with kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey.

Again, Coleridge was a lover of nature, and though it never meant to him what it meant to his friend Wordsworth, almost any poem of his reveals an intimacy unknown to writers of the preceding age; he delights in such images as

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.

The most outstanding feature, however, is Coleridge's use of the mysterious and enchanted past. In his poetry

¹ It was this poem that Byron satirized in the line —
“While Coleridge soars to elegize an ass.”

the magic of the Middle Ages lives again; supernatural forces hover in the air; not Kubla Khan, the reader feels, but Coleridge, "girt in mystery and enigma,"

on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

He steps at will into fairy realms; and we must go with him if we would understand the specter-ship and the seraph-band in *The Ancient Mariner*, or the Lady Geraldine in *Christabel*, or the pleasure-dome in *Kubla Khan*.

In his prose Coleridge is Romantic enough, in that he is imaginative rather than literal, but what strikes the reader most is the precision of the language and the remarkable procession of ideas. It was he who said that in composition "each sentence should beget the next," and little prose is more logically consecutive than his. If his best poetry does not fill many pages, it should be remembered that he was not only a poet, but a great interpretative critic of literature.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834).

The little charity boy who looked with wonder on the precocious Coleridge, was throughout his life an intimate friend of the great poet. The two men were apparently very unlike, for Coleridge was a dreamer and philosopher, Lamb a gentle humorist. The familiar Lamb of *Elia* fame, however, belongs to the later years of the humorist's life. We should not forget that in his early manhood Lamb, like Coleridge, was a Romantic poet; and to understand fully Lamb's humor, we should

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realize that it is not mere wit, but contains, in the background, pathos and sympathy.

Life. Lamb was born February 10, 1775, in Crown Office Row, London, went to Christ Hospital School in London, and spent practically all of his life in the city. Very poor, he was forced to go to work at fourteen.



CHARLES LAMB

From the original engraving by Henry Meyer (after his own painting) in the collection of Ernest Dressel North, Esq.

For a while he was in the South Sea House, but in 1792 he became a clerk in the accountant's office of the East India House. In this office he remained for thirty-three years, and though he rose towards the end to a position of moderate comfort, he was never rich.

After leaving school, Lamb lived with his parents and his sister Mary, but in 1796 his sister, in a fit of insanity, killed her mother.

His father died three years later, and thereafter Lamb lived with his sister and cared tenderly for her. At intervals her malady recurred, but together the two faced their problem and made the best of a tragedy that might have wrecked either alone. Fortunately Lamb had an affectionate nature, which won him many friends, great and small; and these friendships brought out what was

best in him — gentleness, kindliness, and unfailing humor.

Lamb's first published work was four sonnets included with Coleridge's *Poems* of 1796, and during the years immediately following he wrote practically all of his few poems. In the first decade of the new century he wrote a good deal of prose, but most of it, except the *Tales from Shakespeare*, was unsuccessful. He won some reputation in his selections from old dramatists, as a discerning critic of good plays, but fame did not come till the *Essays of Elia*. These did not appear in collected form till 1823, though for three years preceding Lamb had been writing some of the numbers for the *London Magazine*. His only other work of importance was the *Last Essays of Elia*, collected in 1833 and containing many of his best writings.

Retired on a pension in 1825, Lamb pictured his lot in the essay called "The Superannuated Man." "I walk about, not to and from," he says; "I grow into gentility perceptibly." He loved old ways, old friends; he hated to think of himself as middle-aged and serious — or, as he put it in humorous phrase, he "resented the impertinence of manhood" and had an "intolerable disinclination to dying." Truly quaint he must have appeared in his rusty-black knee breeches, when all the world was going into long trousers, stuttering out his boyish fun — submitting when some one valued himself on being "a matter-of-fact man" that he (Lamb) valued himself on being "a matter-of-lie man," — and bringing always with him the spirit of whatsoever was old-fashioned and lovable in literature — Beaumont, Sir Thomas Browne, Isaak Walton, and "heartly, cheerful Mr. Cotton." At

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Enfield, which he called a "vale of deliberate senectitude," he died quietly on December 27, 1834.

Works. Though the lover of Lamb comes finally to enjoy almost anything that came from his pen, none of Lamb's works except *Elia* is of great distinction. In *Elia*, however, he takes rank with the foremost writers of the "familiar" essay; no one has equaled him in abundance and delicacy of humor. The name "Elia" Lamb took from a clerk he had known in the South Sea House thirty years before, but he himself is Elia, as Addison was the Spectator. Lamb's humor defies analysis, but one of the things that has made it last so well is undoubtedly the fact that his style is as humorous as his thought. A few sentences from "A chapter on Ears" may serve to show not only the humor of his language — the "headlong nonsense" of his vocabulary, — but will reveal, too, the tender sentiment into which he passed from time to time and which saved his joking from mere buffoonery.

I have no ear.

Mistake me not, reader — nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. . . . When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean — *for music*. To say that this heart never melted at the concord of sweet sounds would be a foul self-libel. "*Water parted from the Sea*" never fails to move it strangely. So does "*In Infancy*." But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord. . . .

I even think that *sentimentally* I am disposed to harmony. But *organically* I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising "*God save the King*" all my life; whistling and hum-

ming it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

If Lamb's city life and his choice of familiar, "un-romantic" subjects would seem to contrast strangely with the intense Romanticism of his contemporaries, we must not forget that in his early days and to a certain extent in his maturity he was as sentimental as any young Romanticist, but he had too much humor to be victimized by his emotions. Even in *Elia*, however, the treatment, the style, is whimsical, fantastic, a far remove from the sturdy matter-of-fact manner of Johnson's Age. And nothing could be more un-Augustan, more wholly Romantic than the profuse language and the careless construction of Lamb's sentences. Finally, for his literary tradition he went back, like so many of his fellow-writers, to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "The sweetest names," he says, "and which carry a perfume in the mention, are Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley. . . . Winter evenings — the world shut out — with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters."

GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON (1788-1824).

Byron was naturally a fighter. At college he excelled in boxing; later, he was a champion of the revolutionary spirit that lived on after the French Revolution; and he died in the Greek struggle for independence. In fact, it may be said that he defied English social laws, not so much because of profound convictions, as because he was "the arch-apostle of revolt." To the solution

of the problem between democracy and monarchy he brought little except vigorous enthusiasm; as Goethe put it, "When he thinks, he is a child;" and he himself said, in 1813, "I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments." In curious



LORD BYRON

contrast to this splendid vigor was coupled in Byron's nature a deal of affectation and pride—"big bow-wowishness." He was capable of insincerity one moment and sincerity the next; his whole life was a miserable confusion of petulance and generosity, with the stronger side emerging more and more towards the end. Both of these sides were expressed abundantly in his poetry. The weaker side was responsible for a quantity of sentimental

verses; the stronger, however, produced poetry so great that many ¹ have classed him with our very first poets.

Life. Byron was born in London on January 22, 1788, the only son of Captain Jack Byron and Catherine Gordon. On the death of his great-uncle, in 1798, he

¹ Notably Scott, Goethe, Arnold, Taine.

inherited the Byron estate at Newstead and became "Lord Byron." His natural wilfulness developed easily under a mother who at one moment covered him with caresses and at another pursued him with a poker and called him a "lame brat." How sensitive he was may be imagined from the fact that he never forgot the taunt, and in one of his last works, *The Deformed Transformed*, made Arnold reply to his mother's reproaches, "I was born so, mother." At Harrow Byron made little mark—"I was a most unpopular boy, but *led* latterly." As might be supposed, his teachers found him difficult to manage. From Harrow he went in 1805 to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he continued to follow his impulses. The chief of these was to pose as rather wicked and very gay; he spent much of his time in revelry, and finally he brought a bear to college, to "sit for a fellowship." Another of Byron's impulses was sentimental love. His first passion came at the age of eight.

It was while he was at Cambridge that Byron's first published verses, *Hours of Idleness* (1807), appeared. The book was violently attacked by the *Edinburgh Review*. The fighter in Byron was immediately aroused. He rearranged a poem he had already begun and by the spring of 1809 published it as *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a satire, after the manner of Pope's *Dunciad*, in which he had a hard word for nearly all of his contemporaries. It should be added that he later regretted a good deal that he had said, and he suppressed the fifth edition.

Byron had left Cambridge in 1808 without a degree.

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The following year he went with a friend for a two years' trip abroad. The literary result of this trip was *Childe Harold*. Byron had not thought it worth publishing, but it achieved immediate and unprecedented success. Scott was surpassed in his own field; Byron "awoke and found himself famous." For two years



NEWSTEAD ABBEY, BYRON'S HOME

he poured out long narrative poems — *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), the *Corsair* (1814), and *Lara* (1814),—all of which enjoyed the same enthusiastic reception on the part of the public.

In addition to his literary fame, moreover, Byron found himself the center of adulation in society. This pleased his vanity, and incidentally led him into foolish escapades. His marriage, in 1815, to a Miss Milbanke, put only a temporary check to his weaker side; he soon

quarreled with his wife; society turned against him; and in 1816 he left England for good.

The greater part of the next six years Byron spent in Italy. For a while at Venice his excesses amounted to plain coarseness, but he was usually temperate; through most of his life, in fact, he subjected himself to a strict diet, partly on account of his health, partly in order to preserve the beautiful features which charmed so many people in his day and which have been perpetuated in the idealized pictures of him, with the open collar and the curling locks. A great deal of his time in Italy — chiefly at Ravenna, Pisa, and Genoa — was spent in writing. His output was enormous: *Manfred* and *Tasso* in 1817; *Beppo* in 1818; *Mazeppa* and part of *Don Juan*, in 1819. In 1821 came more of *Don Juan*, *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, and *Cain*. He wrote easily and without painstaking revision, but, even then, the quantity is striking; one wonders at the fertility of his genius: he was inexhaustible. In the next three years came, besides minor pieces, the *Vision of Judgment*, *Werner*, *The Island*, *The Deformed Transformed*, and the rest of *Don Juan*.

While in Italy, Byron had shown a strong interest in the cause of Italian freedom and had figured as a chief among the *Carbonari*. In 1823 he threw in his lot with the Greeks and was made commander of Marco Bozaris's famous band of Suliotes; but, before he saw actual fighting, he died of a fever at Missolonghi on April 19, 1824. There was a captivating power in his personality. His friends loved and admired him; his sol-

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diers followed him eagerly; and on his death all Greece went into mourning. The better side of Byron was uppermost in these last days; one feels his "sincerity and strength"—the greatness of spirit that inspired Shelley to call him "the Pilgrim of Eternity."

Works. The quantity, as much as the quality, of Byron's poetry is what strikes the reader. About his verse there is a volume and flow, as of a mighty river; though, to keep up the figure, much of it is muddy and much frothy. Byron wrote carelessly and had not a nice ear for either rhythm or rime. When the verse is at its best, however, there is a magnificence, a fullness to it that can be met nowhere else in such abundance. It is this splendor—what Swinburne meant by the "sincerity and strength,"—that makes the power of such lines as—

The mountains look on Marathon
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;

or the whole of the splendid poem beginning,

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

Of the longer poems, *Childe Harold* is full of such passages; perhaps the most familiar are the description of Waterloo, the picture of the Colosseum, and the apostrophe to the ocean. *Childe Harold*, however, is conspicuous, too, for much sentimental melancholy; Byron liked to make a show of his private feelings. As time wore on, this characteristic disappeared to a certain ex-

tent, while there grew on him a somewhat cynical humor, seen at its best in *Don Juan*, in such lines as the following:

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusty, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head — and there is London Town!

Don Juan, in fact, Byron's longest and really greatest work, shows all of his characteristics: his sentimental melancholy; his jesting, sometimes bitter, sometimes in good fun; his emotional love of nature; his cheap vulgarity; and his "imperishable strength."

Neither *Don Juan* nor *Childe Harold* tells a connected story and both poems are at their best in the digressions. Of the narrative poems, shorter and more connected in plot, *The Prisoner of Chillon* and *Mazeppa* are the best. The first tells the story of a man who has seen his brothers die near him in prison and who, at length released, regains his "freedom with a sigh;" the second tells of the terrible ride of a man bound on a wild horse. Byron tried his hand at drama, but though *Manfred* and *Cain* show his strength, his plays are not up to his other poems, partly because he could not write good blank verse. In lyrics, however, he is often at his best; indeed, the better parts of his longer poems are half-lyrical. Emotion, in other words, not thought, was Byron's strength; and in his best work is always to be

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found an extraordinary intensity of emotion, coupled with an irresistible flow of language.

The Romanticism of such a poet lay of course in his love of freedom. Whether in his feeling for the sea and the storm-beaten mountain, or for the glamour that gathers over ancient ruins, or in his defiance of custom and hatred of tyranny, Byron's Romanticism sprang from a central, consuming love of freedom. It was unthinking and destructive, as has been pointed out, but when Byron was true to his better impulses, it was splendidly vigorous and sincere — the

Eternal spirit of the chainless mind.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822).

Shelley, also a champion of the Revolution, stands in contrast to Byron. "A pardlike spirit, beautiful and swift," "a creature of impetuous breath," he was wholly lacking in the earthliness of his friend; in his emotions he was an "unbodied joy," like his skylark. In his Revolutionary attitude, moreover, he was not, like Byron, a breaker of idols, but, as he thought, a constructive thinker. It happened that his solution of the difficulty was altogether too visionary to work; but it was an earnest, *intellectual* effort to improve, not merely to denounce, the condition of the world.

Shelley's fame to-day, however, does not rest on his political and social theories, but on the beauty of his poetry — on the

clear keen joyance

of his "lyrical cry."

Life. Shelley was born August 4, 1792, at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex. He early developed the two characters — dreamer and revolutionist — so noticeable throughout his life. Like Milton, he looked upon himself as a “dedicated spirit,” and he was willing to take any steps in opposition to what he considered tyranny. The result was an unhappy time at Eton, where both masters and boys seemed tyrannical; expulsion from Oxford, where the authorities took alarm at Shelley’s atheism; a mad marriage with Harriet Westbrook, to protect her from an uncongenial home; and disinheritance by a father who set his entire store on being normal and respectable. Shelley’s atheism need not be taken too seriously; he himself said he used it “to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten the foolish. . . . I used it to express my *abhorrence of superstition*.” And it must be further recognized that Shelley, though he defied social laws, was consistently high-minded, the reverse of dissolute.



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PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Both sides of Shelley found literary expression. While he was still at Eton he wrote an extravagant ro-

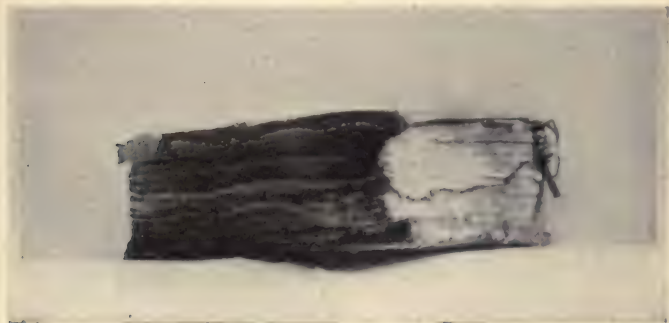
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mance, *Zastrozzi*, and in the same year (1810) began to publish romantic verses. A pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811), which brought the trouble at Oxford to a crisis, and a long poem, *Queen Mab* (1813), which presented his atheistical philosophy, were his next important publications. Shelley later called *Queen Mab* "villainous trash," and indeed he soon outgrew the work of his youth. More and more, his writings tended to express the "unbodied," ethereal side of him, while his other side increasingly confined itself to acts of philanthropy. *Alastor* (1816) is entirely the production of the dreamer in Shelley; and the *Revolt of Islam* (1817) and the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* (1816) suggest, almost as much as *Alastor*, the poet rather than the philosopher.

In 1818 Shelley, now married to Mary Godwin, moved to Italy, where on account of his health he remained for the rest of his life, most of the time at Pisa and Lerici. Here he knew Byron intimately. Only four years were left to Shelley, for he was drowned off Leghorn in July, 1822, but in these years he wrote much of his best work: *Prometheus Unbound* (1819), *The Cenci* (1819), *The Witch of Atlas* (1820), and *Adonais* (1821), while the best of his short lyrics, such as the *Ode to the West Wind*, *The Indian Serenade*, *The Cloud*, *To a Skylark*, *Arethusa*, and *Hymn of Pan*, belong also to this period.

Any account of Shelley's life would be incomplete without a word as to his manner of composition. *The Revolt of Islam* he composed while floating in a boat on the Thames, *Alastor* was written in Windsor Forest,

the *Ode to the West Wind* was "conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno," at Pisa Shelley did most of his work on the roof, and other pieces were written among the broken baths of Caracalla at Rome or floating on the Bay of Naples. Shelley's out-of-doors, moreover, was not merely the matter-of-fact earth and sky; he lived in a realm that we do not inhabit;



SHELLEY'S SOPHOCLES, IN HIS POCKET WHEN HE WAS DROWNED

and to get his point of view we must get the point of view of the skylark, or the cloud, or the west wind.

Works. In his longer, as well as in his shorter poems, it is Shelley's lyrical power that gives his poetry distinction. A lover of nature, a man of keen intellect, a master of various verse-forms, he treats his subjects nearly always in a lyrical way: he is preëminently a *singer*. The emotion in his poetry, however, is never physical, like Byron's, but always ethereal, almost without a trace of earth. It is this quality which makes his poetry appeal only to a few — it is so unrelated to life — and which caused one critic to call him "a beautiful

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and ineffectual angel." The point may be well illustrated by comparing his skylark with Wordsworth's. Wordsworth's soars to heaven, but returns to nest on the ground; it is a

Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

Shelley's lark never returns to earth, but keeps on forever into the sunset and "the pale purple even"—

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

This "unbodied" character of Shelley's verse, if it leaves us floating "in the luminous void," nevertheless has a beauty which springs from its very loftiness: it is "touched with hallowed fire."

Of Shelley's longer poems, *Adonais*, an elegy written on the death of Keats, is the most consistently successful. It owes much to Byron and his handling of the Spenserian stanza, and, like all of Shelley's longer pieces, it is too vague and rambling; but it contains some of the poet's best work—especially the description of himself, with his "branded and ensanguined brow," and the last lines, with their splendid vision:

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;

The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais,¹ like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821).

Keats is coupled with Shelley chiefly because both poets died young in Italy and because Shelley wrote *Adonais*. He showed no interest whatever in the revolutionary and humanitarian enthusiasm of his contemporaries; and though he loved, perhaps even more than Scott did, the Age of Romance, he had a sense of form which links him more truly with Tennyson than with the writers of his own time. In point of fact, he was a whole generation younger than most of his so-called contemporaries, and if he had lived longer, he would no doubt be associated chiefly with the Victorian Age. As it is, he may be called the last of the great Romantic poets.

Life. Keats, born in London, October 29, 1795, came of humble, Cockney stock. At school he was a sturdy little boy, of "a terrier-like resoluteness," with small promise of his poetic future. In his fifteenth year he started as an apprentice to learn surgery, and five years later he passed his examination at Apothecaries' Hall. He never practised, however, for he had already developed along lines which made him say, "I find I cannot exist without Poetry — without eternal Poetry — half the day will not do — the whole of it — I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan."

¹ "Adonais," of course, stands for Keats.

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This feeling for poetry dated from his later school-days, when he began reading and loving the English poets, especially Spenser. Soon after, he became the friend of Leigh Hunt, who praised his verses; in 1816 he wrote his sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*; and the following year he published his first



John Keats -

volume of verse. From now on he was dedicated to poetry; and the extreme sensitiveness of his nature to beauty, together with his vivid imagination, meant that "a virtue went away from him into every one" of his poems. In 1818 his first long poem, *Endymion*, appeared and was at once attacked by the undiscerning and acrimonious reviewers. But, though the reviewers descended to personal abuse, and though Byron and Shelley gave au-

thority to the idea that the young author was practically killed by harsh criticism, Keats was not so much affected by the comments of others as by his own self-analysis. He had written, in the preface to *Endymion*, that it was "a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished;" and now he deliberately set to work to produce what was in truth "a deed accomplished."

His health, however, began to fail as early as 1819. This was due largely to the beginnings of consumption, but was certainly promoted by his love for Fanny

Brawne — a love which, he soon came to realize, could never be followed by marriage, unless he might overcome both his sickness and his poverty. The strain on a man of his intensity of feeling was tremendous; his condition grew steadily worse; by the autumn of 1820 he had to go to Italy for his health; and on the 23rd of the following February he died.

The poems of 1819 and 1820 — the only two years left to poor Keats after *Endymion* had appeared — include his best work: *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, the *Odes*, and *Hyperion*. So great are these few poems that though Keats died at the age of twenty-five, he is counted among the first English poets. The reply that he thus made to the reviewers who advised him to return to his “plasters, pills, and ointment boxes” was characteristic of Keats. His interest was not in calling names, as Byron did in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but in serving poetry. He wrote, “I think I shall be among the English poets after my death;” and Arnold comments: “He is; he is with Shakespeare.”

Works. In his ode *On a Grecian Urn* Keats concludes with the lines,

Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

These two verses express the character of all his thought and work. Somehow we feel, after reading his poems, that nothing can be wholly true that is not beautiful and that nothing can be really beautiful that is not true; and we feel it all the more because Keats

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does not preach at us, but actually reveals the truth of beauty in his lines. We are convinced, in other words, by his beautiful language and his beautiful verse. It is a difficult test to apply, for the reader's taste may be untrue, but Keats, the world more and more realizes, had almost unerring taste, coupled with the rare ability to say exactly what he felt and meant. Sensitive to the finger tips, he had an unequaled appreciation of the rich values of color and sound. A good example of this is the following stanza from *The Eve of St. Agnes*:

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries,
Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
kings.

But, more than this, he had an instinctive understanding of whatever was beautiful and true, so that, though he did not know Greek, he was able to grasp the Greek spirit; and, never dominated by the narrow classicism of many men influenced by Greek, he entered with equal ease into the spirit of the Middle Ages and of Shakespeare's day. As Bacon took all knowledge to be his province, so Keats seems to have taken beauty to be his; wherever he met it he recognized it, intuitively. Nowhere does his poetry maintain a higher level than in his ode *To a Nightingale*, one stanza of which shows

especially well the kind and the greatness of his best work:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

THOMAS DEQUINCEY (1785-1859).

Though DeQuincey was older than many of the writers of the Age of Romanticism, he did not begin writing till his thirty-fourth year; and though much of his work is decidedly Romantic, he suggests strongly, especially in his biographical work for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the Victorian essayists. He was still writing when Carlyle, Macaulay, Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, and Thackeray were in middle life.

DeQuincey says of himself that he had a "constitutional determination to reverie"; and this quality is evident in all his greatest writings. The abiding value of *The Confessions*, *Suspiria*, and *The English Mail-Coach* lies in the profusion and richness of their visions. Not even Coleridge could match the grandeur of DeQuincey's dreams.

Life. DeQuincey was born August 15, 1785, at Manchester. He was a strange child. At the age of five, after the death of his sister, he heard "a solemn wind.

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. . . It was a wind that might have swept the field of mortality for a thousand centuries." A great scholar, especially in Greek, he nevertheless hated his school life and ran away, in 1802, to North Wales and then to London. In the capital he lived for a while in abject poverty,¹ but in 1803 he became reconciled to his family and entered Worcester College, Oxford. There he again did excellent work, but again ran away just before the examination. He was a sensitive, dreamy boy, and, in addition, he suffered much from a peculiar malady of the stomach, brought on by his starvation in London. It was to relieve this pain that in 1804 he first took opium; and though he was for forty years a victim of the habit and at times suffered far more from the opium than from the malady, it should be remembered to his credit that he took it for pain, not for pleasure, and that he was finally man enough, at the age of fifty-nine, to win a victory over the drug.

At twenty-one DeQuincey came into a small legacy and two years later moved into Dove Cottage, Grasmere, the old home of Wordsworth. Though he did not write anything for some time, he was a friend of literary men — among them Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Hazlitt — and was always a great student. He lived, Hood says, in the midst of "a German Ocean of literature in a storm, flooding all the floor, the tables; billows of books tossing, tumbling, surging open." Soon after his marriage in 1816, however, he found himself in narrow circumstances — he was too generous and unpractical to live thriftily — and in 1819 he began to write editorials for

¹ These days are vividly described in *The Confessions*.

the *Westmoreland Gazette*. In 1821 came his famous *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and these were followed, till his death in 1859, by a great number of publications, no less remarkable for their variety than for their quantity. Among them should be noted the novel *Klosterheim* (1832); *The Logic of Political Economy* (1844); such contributions to Blackwood's

Magazine and *Tait's Magazine* as *Murder considered as One of the Fine Arts*, *Dr. Parr*, *The Revolt of the Tartars*, *Suspiria de Profundis*, *The English Mail-Coach*, *Joan of Arc*, and *Literary Reminiscences*; while his contributions to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* included articles on *Goethe*, *Pope*, *Schiller*, and *Shakespeare*.

All through his life DeQuincey's odd ways continued. He was so absent-minded that he sometimes forgot to finish dressing, and once he actually did not notice that his hair had caught fire till his daughter told him. Even in his old age, when he was living with his daughters near Edinburgh, he would disappear at times for several days. Shy, scholarly, eloquent if you could get him to talk, almost diminutive in stature, he was a remarkable figure.



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THOMAS DEQUINCEY

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"You would have taken him," Carlyle says, "by candle-light, for the beautifullest little child; blue-eyed, blonde-haired, sparkling face — had there not been something too which said, 'Eccovi! this child has been in Hell.'"

Works. In DeQuincey's prose one finds an abundance of scholarship and quaint humor, but the chief quality, and the most memorable, is his power of expressing magnificent visions. The highest purpose of literature, he himself said, was not to *teach*, but to *move*; and of this "literature of power"—what he called "impassioned prose"—he has given us triumphant examples. Their greatness lies not only in the wonder of the visions, with their gigantic and tumultuous forms, but equally in the language, which corresponds exquisitely to the author's thought and feeling. No better instance of this power can be found than in the "Dream-Fugue" of *The English Mail-Coach*, where is described the "flying equipage" which, racing up the illimitable central aisle of a "mighty minster," carries to the nations "the secret word"—"*Waterloo and Recovered Christendom!*" A sentence or two may give at least a glimpse of the vision and of the headlong pace of the style:

Of purple granite was the necropolis; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs.

. . . Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs—bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages, battles from yesterday; battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of

flowers; battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. . . . Like rivers in flood wheeling round headlands, like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests, faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us — dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Crécy to Trafalgar.

What DeQuincey says of this hurrying chariot may be said equally of his prose: "Of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening."

OTHER WRITERS.

Besides the great names we have just been considering, the Age of Romanticism includes many important writers, scarcely inferior to those already mentioned and deserving of greater notice than our space will allow. We should have a very inadequate impression of the age, however, if we omitted altogether such authors as JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817), who in her novels¹ carried on the eighteenth century tradition of the novel and made fun of the absurd romances written in her own time. Not the least of her powers was that she could make an interesting story out of trivial incidents; she understood character.

Another important figure is ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843), whose poetry is pale beside that of his friends, Wordsworth and Coleridge, but whose historical prose ranks with any of his time. He was poet-laureate for thirty years. *The Curse of Kehama* (1810) is one of

¹ *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma*, etc.

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his best poems, while his best prose may be found in his *Life of Nelson* (1813) and his *History of the Peninsular War* (1823-32).

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830) belonged to the group intimate with Coleridge and Lamb. In his own day he was counted one of the chief prose writers of the age; and his essays on literature, history, and politics still live—a fate not often enjoyed by critical literature. His *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817) and his *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (1828-30) are among his best work.

One of the most interesting figures of this period is LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859), essayist, journalist, friend of young poets,—an outspoken liberal who was put in prison, in 1813, for saying uncomfortably true things about the Prince Regent. Hunt's works, the best of which perhaps is *The Examiner* (1808), are no longer much read.

Among the friends of Hunt should be noted THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852), the Irish poet and the "Tom Moore" of Byron's famous little poem beginning

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea,
But before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

His best poetry is contained in *Irish Melodies* (1807-1834) and *Lalla Rookh* (1817), while he is remembered equally for his long *Life of Byron* (1830).

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777-1844), the author of the *Pleasures of Hope* (1799), has secured himself against

oblivion by several stirring battle-poems, among them *Hohenlinden*, the *Battle of the Baltic*, and *Ye Mariners of England*.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864), with his "carnivorous laughter," has fallen into what seems to many undeserved obscurity. Full of imagination and feeling, he nevertheless had a sense of form almost as perfect as that of Keats; he wrote poetry and prose of a high order; and one cannot but think that, though he is not now very popular, he will some day come to his own again. True lovers of literature, at least, rank him among the greatest names of his time. His chief fame rests on his *Imaginary Conversations* (1824-1853) and *Pericles and Aspasia* (1836), but his short poems have a grace, a perfection of finish, that deserves attention, too. Take, for instance, the following:

Past ruin'd Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 't is verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1760-1820 1789-1799	GEORGE III The French Revolution	WALTER SCOTT, 1771-1832 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, 1770-1850	Lady of the Lake Intimations of Immortality	Ivanhoe Preface on Poetry
1799-1804	The French Consulate	S. T. COLERIDGE, 1772-1834	Ancient Mariner	Lectures on Shakespeare
1804-1814	Napoleon, Emperor of France	Robert Southey, 1774-1843	Thalaba	Life of Nelson
1805	Battle of Trafalgar	CHARLES LAMB, 1775-1834	The Old Familiar Faces	Essays of Elia
1808-1814	Peninsular War	Maria Edgeworth, 1767-1849		Castle Rackrent
1812-1814	War with the United States	Jane Austen, 1775-1817		Pride and Prejudice
1815	Battle of Waterloo	W. S. LANDOR, 1775-1864	Rose Aylmer	Imaginary Conversations
1820-1830	GEORGE IV	Thomas Campbell, 1777-1844	Pleasures of Hope	Life of Napoleon
1830-1837 1830	WILLIAM IV First Steam Railroad in England	William Hazlitt, 1778-1830 Thomas Moore, 1779-1852 Leigh Hunt, 1784-1859	Irish Melodies Rimini	Life of Byron Autobiography Opium-Eater
1832 1833	Reform Bill Abolition of Slavery in British West Indies	THOMAS DE QUINCEY, 1785-1859 LORD BYRON, 1788-1824 PERCY B. SHELLEY, 1792-1822		Childe Harold Prometheus Unbound
		JOHN KEATS, 1795-1821 Thomas Hood, 1798-1845		Eve of St. Agnes Song of the Shirt

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
READING.

[NOTE. Selections from the chief works of nineteenth century authors are so numerous and so accessible that in most cases only a standard edition is cited.]

LITERATURE. SCOTT. Life by Lockhart, 5 vols. (Macmillan), ranks among the great biographies. A good briefer account is by A. Lang (Scribners). *The Waverley Novels*, 48 vols. (Black), is an excellent edition of Scott's novels. The *Poetical Works* are well edited in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan).

WORDSWORTH. Life by Myers (English Men of Letters Series). See also Arnold's essay on *Wordsworth* in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (Macmillan). Works ed. by Morley in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan).

COLERIDGE. Life by Campbell (Macmillan). See also Carlyle's account in *John Sterling*, Chap. VIII (Scribners). *Poetical Works* in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan); *Prose Works* in the Bohn Library.

CHARLES LAMB. Life by Lucas, 2 vols. (Putnam), is the best. A good one-volume account by Ainger (English Men of Letters Series). The complete *Works* are published in 12 vols. by Dutton.

DEQUINCEY. Life by Masson (English Men of Letters Series). See also DeQuincey's *CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM-EATER* and *AUTOBIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES*. The best edition of DeQuincey's works is by Masson, 14 vols. (Black).

BYRON. Life by Roden Noel (Great Writers Series). See also Arnold's essay on Byron in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (Macmillan). Complete poems ed. by Prothero and Coleridge (Scribner).

SHELLEY. Life by Symonds (English Men of Letters Series). Works, ed. by Dowden, in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan).

KEATS. Life by Colvin (English Men of Letters Series).

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Complete Works, ed. by Forman, 5 vols. (Crowell); *Poetical Works*, ed. by Houghton in the Aldine Poets (Macmillan).

MARIA EDGEWORTH'S best novel, *CASTLE RACKRENT*, is published by Macmillan; JANE AUSTEN'S novels are very conveniently published on India paper, 2 vols., by Nelson. SOUTHEY, LANDOR, CAMPBELL, and MOORE are well represented in the *Golden Treasury Series* (Macmillan). The *Camelot Series* (Scott) has good selections from HAZLITT and LEIGH HUNT. Selections from HOOD are published by Routledge. Most of these writers are well represented in *Ward, Craik, Manly*, and the *Century Readings*.

SUGGESTED READINGS.

The following list forms a fairly good introduction to the Age of Romanticism:

Scott's *IVANHOE* *QUENTIN DURWARD*, *KENILWORTH*, *TALISMAN*, *WOODSTOCK*, *GUY MANNERING*; *MARMION*, *LADY OF THE LAKE*.

Wordsworth's *MICHAEL*, *HAPPY WARRIOR*, *ODE TO DUTY*, *ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY*, *TINTERN ABBEY*, *A POET'S EPITAPH*, and many shorter poems (a good collection of which is given in the *Golden Treasury Series*).

Coleridge's *ANCIENT MARINER*, *CHRISTABEL*, *KUBLA KHAN*, *FRANCE*, *FROST AT MIDNIGHT*, *FEARS IN SOLITUDE*, *ODE TO DEJECTION*, *HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI*; selections from the *LECTURES ON SHAKESPEARE*.

Lamb's *ESSAYS OF ELIA*, especially *Christ's Hospital*, *A Chapter on Ears*, *Dream-Children*, *The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers*, *Roast Pig*, *Poor Relations*, *The Superannuated Man*, *Old China*; *HESTER* and *THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES* (two poems); and selections from the *LETTERS*.

DeQuincey's *CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM-EATER*, *JOAN OF ARC*, *THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH*, *REVOLT OF THE TARTARS*, and *SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS*.

Byron's *PRISONER OF CHILLON*, *MAZEPPA*, *CHILDE HAROLD* (Cantos III and IV), *ODE TO NAPOLEON*, *THE ISLES OF GREECE*,

FAME, THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB, and selections from MANFRED, CAIN, and DON JUAN.

Shelley's SKYLARK, WEST WIND, CLOUD, ARETHUSA, PAN, EUGANEAN HILLS, STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES, PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, and ADONAIS.

Keats's EVE OF ST. AGNES, HYPERION, ODE ON A GRECIAN URN, ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE, ODE TO AUTUMN, LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI, and selections from the SONNETS.

In addition one should read, even in an introductory excursion, one of Jane Austen's novels (preferably, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE) and such selections from other authors as are given in Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn) and Manly's *English Prose* (Ginn) or in *Century Readings* (Century).

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. McCarthy, *The Epoch of Reform* (Epochs of Modern History). Carlyle's *French Revolution*, 3 vols. (Scribner), gives an excellent idea of the revolutionary forces at work, though it has little value as a well-proportioned history. Saintsbury, *History of Nineteenth Century Literature* (Macmillan); Beers, *English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* (Holt); and Herford, *Age of Wordsworth* (Macmillan). H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, DeQuincey's *Literary Reminiscences*, and Hunt's *Autobiography* are indispensable contemporary sources. See also special chapters in books recommended on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, Scott's *Antiquary*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Lever's *Charles O'Malley* and *Tom Burke of Ours*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* are novels that cover a wide range of subjects from the French Revolution to the Battle of Waterloo. Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic* and *Ye Mariners of England* (in conjunction with which may be read Kipling's *White Horses*, Newbolt's *Admirals All*, and Noyes's *Nelson's Ghost*) are poems recalling Nelson's great victories; Wolfe's *The Burial of Sir John More* suggests the Peninsular War; and Byron's *Ode to Napoleon* and *Childe Harold* (Canto III) bring back the final struggle with Bonaparte.

CHAPTER IX

THE VICTORIAN AGE

(1835-1900).

The nineteenth century is so near to us that it is difficult to put its chief characteristics into a few words, and impossible, even at great length, to treat it quite accurately. Certain large qualities, however, begin to stand out with comparative clearness. More than any age since the time of Elizabeth, it represents diversity of interest and amazing vitality. This new life would seem to have sprung chiefly from two things: from the period of Revolution that immediately preceded it; and from the remarkable growth of Science, which began in the eighteenth century. Both of these, however, go back, if somewhat vaguely, to the sudden awakening of interest in this world which took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Without some understanding of the general trend of human endeavor — moving successively towards religious, political, and social freedom — we shall miss much of the meaning of nineteenth century literature.

The Revolution, which took definite shape in France, affected all Europe. The poets of the early nineteenth century had heard its message of emancipation and had dreamed of ideal democracy, but the first practical expression of it in England was the Reform Bill of 1832. This was followed throughout the century by further

reform measures — attempts to bring about fair elections and fair taxes, to improve public institutions, and to adjust the relations of labor and capital; and though recent events show that the adjustment is far from complete, the political England of the present day is almost immeasurably advanced over the England of George III.

This advance must be traced in part to the great development in commercial prosperity, which began in the eighteenth century. With it the great middle class came into control; cities grew astonishingly;¹ education was given to the masses; new universities were founded; the cheapness and accessibility of books brought the "general reading public" into being; — every man, in short, had a chance to know and to think.

This commercial prosperity, of course, went hand in hand with the practical application of science. The use of steam, the telegraph and telephone, the electric light, the perfection of machinery in manufacture, are only the chief triumphs of nineteenth-century man over matter. The whole stupendous development may be indicated by recalling the fact that news from China, in 1840, took four months to reach Boston and that now it takes literally no time at all; in fact, if it be wired westward, it takes less than no solar time. When we add to these advances in the realm of transportation the almost countless discoveries in other branches — such as medicine, surgery, astronomy, geology, biology, psychology, — when we realize, indeed, that science as we understand

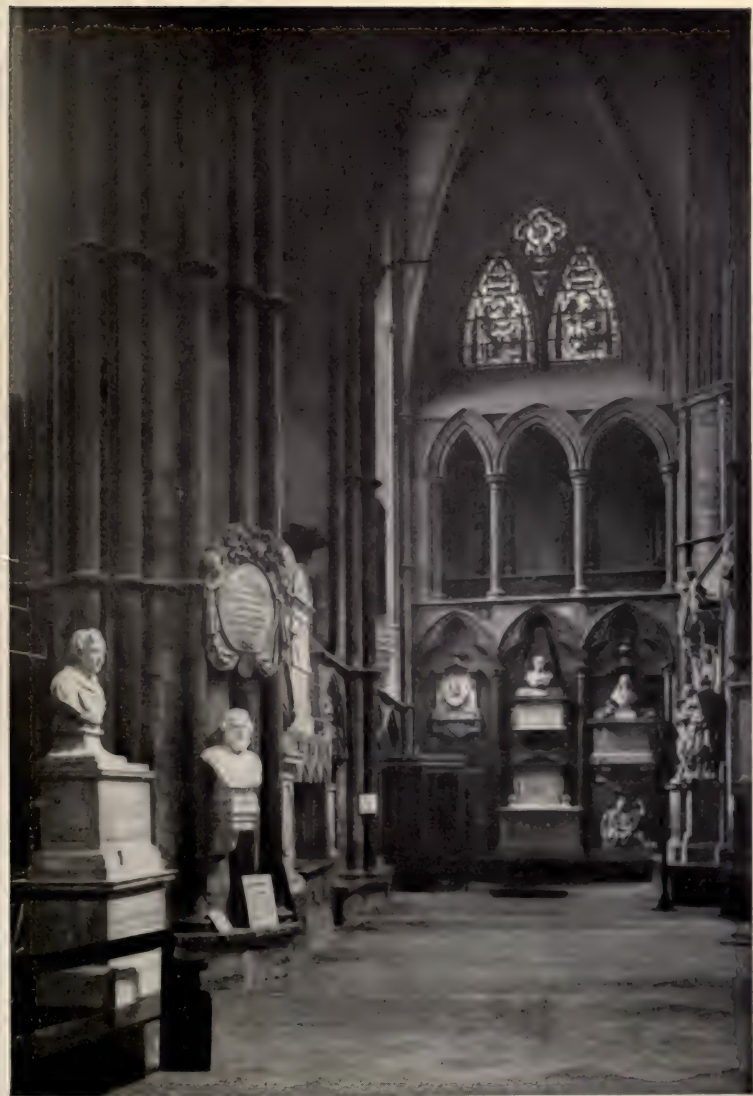
¹ The population of London had increased in 1901 to six times that of 1801.

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it hardly existed a century ago, we have some idea of its importance in the Victorian era.

To many this importance seemed dangerous. For science was too busy attempting to explain all things by material evidence; it strove, for a while, to understand the next world as well as this by scientific researches; — or, worse yet, it made men so comfortable that they grew complacent and materialistic: they lived in a world of hard fact, where money seemed to accomplish more than ideals. In the one case the old dogmatic religions were knocked on the head; in the other, religion ceased to be man's concern. For a while, there was confusion enough; but towards the end of the century men began to see what Tennyson with "prophetic soul" had seen in 1850, that science and true religion are complementary, not antagonistic; and still more recently the western world has begun to awaken from its hard materialism into a fresh sense of spiritual values. The movement towards universal peace and the brotherhood of man belongs properly to such recent times that it has little literature and its history is as yet unwritten; but, as Wordsworth and Shelley were the prophets of an age they did not live to see, so Tennyson, Carlyle, and Ruskin dreamed and preached of conditions which we are beginning to think almost possible.

The literature of the Victorian Age was chiefly prose. In the first place, Scott in his *Waverley Novels* had set the fashion for the reading public. More important still, men's minds were generally turned to the hard fact, away from the romantic dreams of poets. The new reading public, further, was able to read prose when it



POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

was too ignorant to read verse. The result was that the novel, particularly the realistic novel, flourished; while towards the end of the century a new kind of fiction, the *short story*, supplied the needs of readers with little leisure. There was, of course, some romantic fiction, and there grew up, too, a new kind of out-of-doors Romanticism, best illustrated by the work of Robert Louis Stevenson; but the main course of fiction, through Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot to Kipling, was realistic. In addition, there was a great mass of historical and scientific prose; while the prose essay became popular for all sorts of writing, for the "literature of power" as well as for the "literature of knowledge." Since prose was the medium of expression sought by nearly every one, great names as well as small figure in the list of historians and essayists: it is the age of Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Newman, Darwin, and Spencer.

Age of prose though it was, there was a great deal of poetry written. In only two cases, however,—those of Tennyson and Browning,—is the poetry above the second rank; but the names of such poets as Arnold, Kingsley, Rossetti, Swinburne, and Kipling are important in this myriad-sided period. Though some of the poetry, notably that of Tennyson, Browning, and Kipling, reflects the age in which it was written, it is far less representative than the prose. Much of it, in Tennyson as well as in such poets as Swinburne, is a continuation of the Romantic tradition; while other parts deal, like the prose visions of Carlyle and Ruskin, with worlds not yet realized.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-1892).

Tennyson is for many reasons the most representative poet in the Victorian Age. More than any he reflected its expansion and its conflict; he carried on the noblest traditions of the poetry of the past; and he

dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

In addition, he was the most popular poet of Victorian days; his poems were read by all sorts of people. As a result, his influence on the reading public was larger than that of other poets, who appealed only to comparatively small groups of readers. His activity covered about sixty years, from 1830 to 1892.

Life. Few of the details of Tennyson's life are significant. More important are the general facts of his intimacy with nature, his shyness, and his love of seclusion; while it is essential to remember that his period of literary activity covered the whole age of Victorian literature, from the death of Scott to the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Born August 6, 1809, in the village of Somersby, Lincolnshire, Tennyson received the greater part of his early education from his father, the rector of the parish. He soon was trying his hand at verses and together with his brother Charles he brought out some juvenile poems in 1827. The following year he entered Cambridge, where he became the intimate friend of Arthur Henry Hallam, later immortalized in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. His college career was irregular and never finished; its



ALFRED TENNYSON

From a photograph by Mayall

chief interest centers in his friendships, his membership in a literary society, "The Apostles," and his winning the prize medal for poetry. Too shy to take part in the debates of the society, he was brilliant in conversation, and he read poetry beautifully. "What struck one most about him," says one who knew him, "was the union of strength with refinement." In 1830 he went with Hallam to Spain, for the purpose of giving financial aid to the revolutionists; and in 1831 he left Cambridge without a degree and returned for six years to his Lincolnshire home.

Tennyson's first volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, appeared in 1830, but his first book of importance, containing such famous verses as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Cænone*, *The Palace of Art*, and *The Lotus-Eaters*, belongs to the year 1832. The book was vigorously attacked by the reviews; Tennyson was called "Schoolmiss Alfred"; and the *Quarterly's* criticism was so severe that he nearly gave up writing. For ten years he published nothing, and during this time he suffered a great deal from depression of spirits, partly because of the death of his friend Hallam, partly because of his apparent failure. In 1842 he published his third volume, containing such poems as *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, and *Sir Galahad*; the book was well received; and in spite of occasional setbacks, his rise in both fame and fortune dates from this time. Carlyle has left a famous picture of him: "One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusky dark hair; bright laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking, clothes

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cynically loose, free-and-easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to."

Carlyle did not have to wait long to see, for in 1847 Tennyson published his long poem, *The Princess*, a pioneer consideration of the question of woman's rights, and justly famous for its beautiful songs; while in 1850 came *In Memoriam*, his tribute to his friend Hallam. The same year, on the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson was made Poet Laureate. In this year, too, increasing income enabled him to marry Emily Sellwood, to whom he had been engaged for many years. From now on he was the recognized chief among English poets. His books were widely read; his purse was filled, and he moved into a comfortable house at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. Among his intimate friends he numbered such men as Browning, Thackeray, Ruskin, and Gladstone; and he was frequently visited and honored by royalty. Still very retiring, however, he shunned publicity and declined a baronetcy, offered him by both Gladstone and Disraeli; it was not till 1883 that he consented, somewhat reluctantly, to accept Gladstone's offer of a peerage.

Additional works added to Tennyson's fame. His great *Ode on the Duke of Wellington* in 1852, *Maud* in 1855, the first of his *Idylls of the King* in 1859, and the very popular *Enoch Arden* in 1864 so bettered his financial condition that he built a large house at Aldworth,

in Surrey. Here he spent the summers, reserving Farringford for the winter months. To the end of his life he continued to write with vigor. Additional *Idylls of the King* appeared in 1869 and 1885; a new field, drama, was entered upon with success as late as 1875—in *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket*; and such well-known shorter poems as *The Revenge*, *The Defence of Lucknow*, *Ode to Virgil*, and *Crossing the Bar* belong to the later years. Few poets have enjoyed so much honor in their life-time as Tennyson did. He died at the age of eighty-three and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Works. One cannot read much of Tennyson without realizing that his poetry reflects the thought of his age. In *Maud*, with its championship of the Crimean War and its closing moral—

It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill—

he touches an actual event; in *The Princess*, with its conclusion that “woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse,”—“not like to like, but like in difference,” he argues a question that fifty years later grew burning; and in such poems as *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* and *In Memoriam* he reviews the spiritual conflict that the growing science was beginning to start in men’s minds.

Forward, backward, backward, forward in the immeasurable
sea,
Sway’d by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you
or me,—

here, in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, he touches

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the theory of Evolution that after Darwin's great book, in 1859, invaded all forms of thinking; and he goes on:

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was
born,
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and for-
lorn;

and though he does not see the world getting steadily better, though he beholds too often

Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud,

he concludes the poem with confident hope,—

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man can half-control his
doom.

Through *In Memoriam*, the beautiful poem to his friend Hallam, sounds the same earnest confidence, with an added religious dignity and a strong conviction that our faith depends more on our inner sense of truth than on mere human knowledge:

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Growing thus by our faith, our "higher knowledge," we come nearer gradually to

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

Though this philosophy of life as an evolution was a hard blow to the old dogmatic theologies, the churches came to realize, some years later, a newer, more spiritual theology; while scientists, over-bold at first, came equally to recognize that their province was the material world. Men learned, through science, to look the facts in the face, to give up dogma and superstition, and they learned, through the new, larger faith, to understand what Wordsworth had understood years before when he wrote of

A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
 And rolls through all things.

Nowhere has Tennyson comprehended the whole subject better than in his little poem, *The Making of Man*:

Where is one that, born of woman, altogether can escape
 From the lower world within him, moods of tiger, or of ape?
 Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning Age of ages,
 Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while the races flower and
 fade,

Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on the shade,
 Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices blend in
 choric

Hallelujah to the Maker, "It is finish'd. Man is made."

Tennyson's work, however, has special interest apart

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from its interpretation of the age; the beauty of the verse appeals by itself. The chief reasons for this appeal are to be found in his rare descriptive and lyric power. A minute knowledge of nature, especially of flowers, which supplied him with beautiful figures of speech, and an ear peculiarly sensitive to rhythm and the harmony of words served him so well that citation might be made from nearly all his poems. Such passages as that in *Ulysses* ending

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,—

or the lines in *The Palace of Art*,

A full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain,—

or those descriptive of Sir Launcelot,

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;—

these are among the best-known examples of Tennyson's descriptive skill. But, far more than this mere skill, he brought to his work imagination and singing power that defy analysis. It is these qualities that we feel, though we cannot explain them, in such songs as those in *The Princess* and in *Maud* and in the full melody of *Crossing the Bar*. After all, these poems were

written to be enjoyed, rather than explained; and we have only to read them to enjoy them.

A word must be added, however, about Tennyson's love of the classics. Many a phrase is a direct translation from the classics, familiar in such passages as

Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows,

and in Sir Bedivere's "dividing the swift mind, in act to throw"; while in the little poem to Catullus, the poet breaks directly into Latin—"O venusta Sirmio,"—as if English were not quite sufficient. This intimacy with the classics, moreover, so passed into Tennyson's nature that he absorbed much of their beautiful dignity, so evident in his stately lines *To Virgil*:

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen every purple Cæsar's
dome —
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound forever of Imperial
Rome —

.

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of
man.

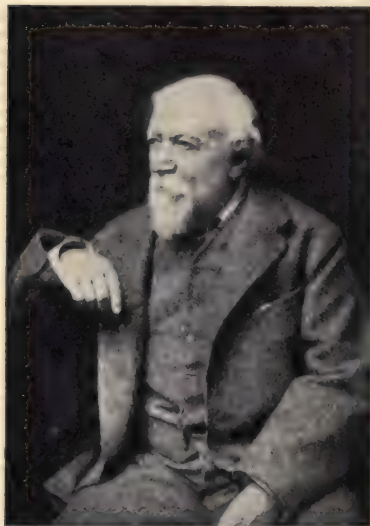
ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889).

Browning entered in spirit into the life he depicted and expressed himself more often through persons than through scenes. This ability, to see with another's eyes and to speak with another's tongue, made him realize the great truth that there is something to be said for almost every point of view. The poet's task, as Chaucer had conceived it five hundred years before and as Brown-

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ing now conceived it, was to present the different, apparently conflicting views; to show truth, not in isolated perfection, but, mingled with falsehood and fiction, in all sorts of ordinary people and commonplace things. This Browning did with extraordinary vigor and versatility.

An odd love of the fantastic produced in Browning's



ROBERT BROWNING

From a photograph, copyright by William H. Grove, London, presented by the poet to Mrs. Katharine Bronson

poetry what has often been called obscurity. He was greatly interested in odd, out-of-the-way points of view and in unfamiliar figures, such as Paracelsus, Rabbi Ben Ezra, Abt Vogler; and this interest, coupled with a breathless speed of thought that meant broken sentences, resulted in a style that is often difficult to read. In Browning's main work, however, he is merely complex, not obscure; and in the exuberant

message of hopefulness and honest endeavor which he reiterated, in common with the other great spirits of his time, he is not even complex. Still, he is chiefly the scholar's poet; and one who does not bring a considerable knowledge of the classics, of history, and of literature will miss much of Browning's meaning.

Life. Browning's life, more than one would suppose from his poetry, was quiet and conventional; he hated to be thought eccentric. Except for the dramatic incident of his marriage, the details of his life are even less significant than those of Tennyson's.

Browning was born May 7, 1812, in Camberwell, on the outskirts of London. He was particularly fortunate in his parents: a quiet, scholarly father, who held a comfortable position in the Bank of England, and a musical, deeply religious mother. Except for a few years at a private school and a few months at London University, Browning received most of his education at home. Among his favorite authors were Byron, Shelley, and Keats; and he himself early showed a disposition to make verses. At twenty-one he wrote *Pauline* and the following year he contributed four short poems, among them *Porphyria's Lover*, to the *Monthly Repository*. His first work of importance, however, was *Paracelsus* (1835), which, though it was not widely read, gained him a foothold in literary circles. The following year the actor Macready asked him to write a play. *Strafford*, the resulting drama, was well acted by Macready and Helen Faucit and met with great success. For several years Browning wrote plays, among them *Pippa Passes*, *King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*, and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*; but in 1842 he quarreled with Macready and soon after gave up writing plays. During these years of play-making, Browning wrote many other poems — his long poem *Sordello*,¹

¹ Carlyle said that his wife was unable to tell whether "Sordello" was a man, a city, or a book!

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and such famous shorter pieces as *The Pied Piper*, *How They Brought the Good News*, and *Home Thoughts from the Sea*.

Among the admirers of Browning's work was the poetess Miss Elizabeth Barrett, already far more famous than he. Miss Barrett was an invalid, as a result of a riding accident in her youth, but by 1846 doctors agreed that fresh air and sunshine might effect a cure; and Browning, as his intimacy grew to love, urged a trip to Italy. But Miss Barrett's father refused. He had given his life to caring for his daughter, till the hushed and darkened room had become meat and drink to him, till he was unable to forego the sentimental melancholy of watching by a sick-bed. Browning thereupon eloped with Miss Barrett; in Italy she recovered her health; and the story of their fifteen years of married life is one of the most beautiful records in history.

For a while Browning produced little poetry. *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, *The Statue and the Bust*, and *Men and Women* were the only new publications between his marriage in 1846 and his wife's death in 1861, but *Men and Women* contained some of his best pieces, notably *By the Fireside*, *The Last Ride Together*, *Evelyn Hope*, and *A Grammarian's Funeral*.¹ After his wife's death he turned with energy to writing and continued to produce actively for the next twenty-five years. The great work of this period was *The Ring and the Book* (1868), "the Roman Murder story," as he called it,—but he wrote a great deal else: transla-

¹ These were later published under *Dramatic Lyrics and Romances*.

tions from the Greek; more dramatic monologues, among them *Abt Vogler* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*; such well-known poems as *Prospice* and *Hervé Riel*; and a great many others, such as *Ferishtah's Fancies*, in which his grotesque manner had grown into a mannerism. His last piece, however, the *Epilogue to Asolando*, has the ring of his best work and fitly closed the life of

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

Works. It is not quite fair to give an isolated example of Browning's obscurity, for the difficulty often vanishes when the passage is read in its context. It is easier to illustrate his love of unusual order of words and awkward sounds, as in

Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed
beast?

The grotesqueness of such lines, together with his breathless haste of thought and sudden digressions, accounts largely for the obscurity of certain passages.

The breathlessness, however, is first cousin to one of Browning's chief merits: his keenness of thought. Few other poets give the reader quite the intellectual exhilaration that he does. He seems to see at once more quickly and more clearly than most men; and his keen insight finds corresponding expression in vivid language, such as

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Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.

And he brings the same vivid language to his descriptions, familiar in such phrases as

In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine,

and

Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay.

Browning's chief fame, however, rests on two things: his way of getting at truth and his exuberant optimism. The first of these is well illustrated by his greatest and longest poem, *The Ring and the Book*. The "book" was a small volume which contained the record of the trial and conviction of Count Guido Franceschini, for the murder of his wife Pompilia. The figure of the "ring" was this: that pure gold is unmalleable, that it must be mixed with alloy till it has been "wrought," but that the workman finally extracts most of the alloy, leaving

The rondure brave, the liliated loveliness,
Gold as it was, is, shall be evermore.

Truth must be handled in much the same way; is revealed, in fact, in half-truths, fictions, and falsehoods, till, finally, out of all available points of view we make the ring of truth. So, in *The Ring and the Book* Browning, working from the facts contained in the "old yellow Book" he had picked up in Florence, presents every sort of evidence for the prosecution and defense: each

speaker, even the murderer, gives a reasonable story; it is hard for the reader to decide whether the one "Half-Rome" or "The Other Half-Rome" is right; and it is only at the end, when the Pope sums up the case — extracts the alloy, as it were,—that the guilt is seen clearly to rest on the count. Now this is Browning's point: that both halves of Rome were right, yet neither wholly right; that any one in fact, no matter how detestable or prejudiced, reveals, even when he is at his worst, some glints of the truth. So, in his other poems in the form of dramatic monologue Browning speaks for all sorts of people, *from their point of view*,—whether for wretched impostors like "Mr. Sludge, The Medium," for philosophers like "Rabbi Ben Ezra," or for musicians like "Abt Vogler." In most cases Browning leaves it to the reader to extract the alloy — he prefers to present the truth as it comes in this world, revealed in imperfect personalities; but out of the different pictures, or, rather, out of a composite of them all, the reader comes gradually to the wholesome realization that truth is lurking everywhere, that even

This rage was right i' the main.

This view, that man is "a God though in the germ," is of a piece with the optimism that rings in Browning's poetry, all the way from

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world!

in *Pippa Passes* to the vigorous encouragement in the last lines he wrote, nearly fifty years later:

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No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

Browning felt abundantly, as he makes Saul come to feel when David sings to him,

How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!

And at the end of his poem *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* he makes the adventurous soul press on, in spite of dreary discouragements, in spite of a vision, at the last, of all the rest who have gone before and failed:—

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! In a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew. "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*"

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859).

Though Macaulay wrote some stirring poetry, his great achievement was in prose. In addition, he was a brilliant orator and a recognized power in the House of Commons. A man of high but practical ideals, he was satisfied with a world of fact, was without spiritual curiosity; he expresses the better side of Victorian materialism—practical vigor, shrewdness, success. Possessed of a marvelous memory and a great power over

language, he developed a style long famous for its clearness, brevity, and force, a style which has reached the general public so successfully that journalists have ever since followed his lead. No essayist has been so popular; it is said that many have received the chief part of their education from him. His obvious defects,—lack of intellectual sympathy and spiritual insight,—are largely offset by his power of making facts live again in vivid narrative.

Life. Macaulay was born October 25, 1800, at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire, his aunt's home. Nearly his whole life, however, was spent in London, the home of his parents, quiet people of the upper middle class.

In extreme youth the boy showed strongly the industry and love of books which marked his later life, and before he was eight he compiled a *Compendium of Universal History*, while, soon after, he wrote long poems in Scott's manner. Passing through Cambridge University, where he made a brilliant record, he studied law in London, and in 1830 was elected to the House of Commons. He already had a great reputation as a talker — while still at college he not only surpassed his fellows, but talked so interestingly that he once held a distinguished company of older men spell-bound throughout the day, forgetful of meals. In the House he allied himself with the reform party and supported eagerly the



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THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

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great Reform Bill of 1832. "Whenever he rose to speak," Gladstone said, "it was a summons like a trumpet-call to fill the benches." From 1834 to 1838 he served on the Supreme Council in India; from 1839 to 1841 he was Secretary of War, under Melbourne; in 1846 he was Paymaster-General under Russell. From now on, however, though he sat again in the House of Commons, and after 1857, when he was raised to the peerage, in the House of Lords, he gave up active work in public office and turned increasingly to his writing.

He had come early into literary fame. In 1823 he began to write for *Knight's Magazine*, and in 1825 his remarkable *Essay on Milton* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Through the rest of his life he marshaled in brilliant essays the abundant knowledge that his keen memory retained from his wide and exact reading. Most of these—among them the essays on *Hallam's Constitutional History*, *Frederick the Great*, *Lord Clive*, *Von Ranke's History of the Popes*, and *Addison*—came out in the *Edinburgh Review*; while to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (8th edition) he contributed brilliant biographies, which included those of *Bunyan*, *Goldsmith*, and *Johnson*. Besides his essays, Macaulay gained fame by his poetry. After leaving college he did not write a great deal of verse, but his *Armada*, *Ivry*, and *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) were immediately popular. The great work of his maturity, however, was his *History of England*. In the original plan it was to cover the period from 1685 to 1830, but only a small portion, as far as William III, was finished before heart disease cut the work short. The *History*, of which the five vol-

umes written were published between 1848 and 1861, was a colossal undertaking, and on its account Macaulay withdrew more and more from active public life. The gigantic fragment was at once immensely popular and is still read more, perhaps, than any work of a similar nature. On December 28, 1859, Macaulay died. He was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Works. When Trevelyan, in speaking of Macaulay's conversation, says, "To get at his meaning people had never the need to think twice, and they certainly had seldom the time," he touches the underlying causes of Macaulay's success in his writings. A lucidity that cannot be misunderstood and a vigor that compels attention are everywhere noticeable. Nowhere are these traits more obvious than in his poetry. He is incapable of lofty flights; he has no visions to picture, no theory of life to express; but he is almost alone in his power of portraying a heroic scene. Every boy knows *Horatius at the Bridge*, and many a reader has thrilled over *Ivry*, especially where the king calls to his men,

Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks
of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.

In his prose Macaulay's greatest strength is in vivid narrative and in descriptions of persons. He knew how to assemble striking details. The balance of his sentences, moreover, though it sometimes gives his prose a deafening monotony, as of a reiterating machine, gives it also a dignity and eloquence that are impressive. A good example of this eloquent style at its best is the

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paragraph in the *Essay on Milton* where Macaulay speaks of the Restoration:

Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King¹ cringed to his rival² that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. . . . In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch;³ and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race⁴ accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881).

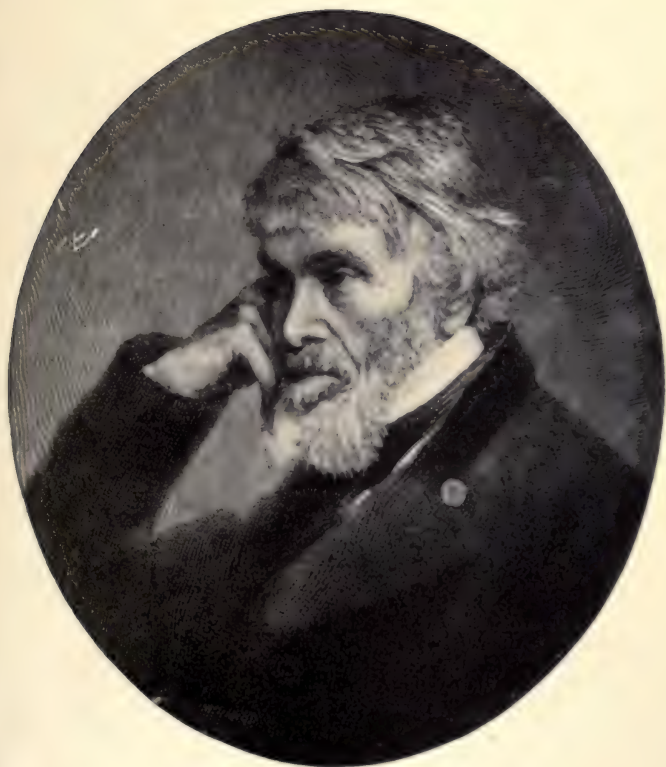
In contrast to the easy success of the matter-of-fact Macaulay, Carlyle struggled for years in obscurity, wrestled with spiritual doubt, suffered and aspired, hated the "Age of Steam," and, finally, wrote in stirring words

¹ Charles II.

² Louis XIV.

³ Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, described the profligate Royalists of Restoration days as "the sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine;" and in the same poem Belial and Moloch are prominent among Satan's rebel leaders.

⁴ The Stuarts, driven out by Cromwell in 1649, by William of Orange in 1689. It must be clearly remembered that Macaulay, who over-paints the infamy, was "a bottomless Whig."



THOMAS CARLYLE

From a photograph taken in 1874 by John Patrick, Edinburgh

a gospel that reached the heart of mankind. This gospel was that the "crown of spiritual manhood" is won by honest endeavor, by production of the best that each has in him. "All true Work is Religion: and whatsoever Religion is not Work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbor."

A gloomy, sensitive man, full of rugged strength and master of a powerful style all his own, Carlyle is one of the most interesting personalities in his age.



BIRTHPLACE OF CARLYLE, ECCLEFECHAN

Life. Carlyle, born at Ecclefechan, in southwestern Scotland, on December 4, 1795, was the son of a stonemason, "wholly a man of action, with speech subservient thereto." After attending the Grammar school at Annan, near-by, Carlyle, too poor to ride, walked eighty miles to Edinburgh and entered the university. He was destined for the Scottish church, but he soon gave up studying for the ministry, and for several years after leaving college went through an unhappy period, with uncertain prospects. A good deal of this time was spent in teaching, but Carlyle did not like the work. His other occupation was literary, chiefly the translation of scientific articles, but for years he was aimless and drifting; he did not make any success of writing till he was about thirty. In 1821, however, came the turning point in his life. He was going through much

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the same spiritual struggle as he ascribes to Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus*, and to him, as to Teufelsdröckh, there came the answer to the "Everlasting No": "I am not thine [the devil's], but Free, and forever hate thee!" "Perhaps," he goes on, "I directly thereupon began to be a man." It was at about the same time, too, that Carlyle fell in love with the brilliant Jane Welsh, whom he married five years later; and these two things, his love and his spiritual "re-birth," were the beginning of a central purpose in his life.

Carlyle's first literary work of importance was his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in 1824. This, with other translations, a *Life of Schiller* (1825), and his essay on *Burns*, made up his best early work; but he was as yet little known. Poor and in weak health, he continued to have periods of depression, as he did to the end of his days; but both Carlyle and his wife, in spite of gloom and loneliness, had sufficient sense of humor to joke about "the raal mental awgony in my ain inside." In 1828 they went to live at Craigenputtock, an old farm sixteen miles from Dumfries, and there Carlyle wrote his *Sartor Resartus*. It was at first refused by publishers, but finally appeared serially (1833-34) in *Fraser's Magazine*. To be in the literary center, in spite of noise and expenses, the Carlyles moved in 1834 to Cheyne Row, Chelsea, in the West End of London. Here Carlyle had a double wall built to his attic study, for the purpose of keeping out the noise of the street and the crowing of the neighbors' cocks. It is from this time, with the publication of *Sartor*, that his literary prominence dates. At the age of forty he had strug-

gled out of obscurity. He soon numbered great men among his friends, Southey, Landor, Dickens, Tennyson, Emerson, and, later, Browning and Ruskin.

The French Revolution (1837) won Carlyle a wide circle of readers and admirers, and his lectures, the chief of them on *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840), were even more popular. It was in the *Heroes*, as in *Chartism* (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843) that he began to figure as a sort of prophet, denouncing the shams and materialism of his age, and upholding honest work as the "crown of spiritual manhood." "I do not want cheaper cotton, swifter railroads," he wrote; "I want what Novalis calls 'God, Freedom, Immortality.'" It is hard to overstate the enthusiasm with which serious young men looked up to him, as the true counselor. As he had but one great thing to say, in the course of time his repetition grew impatient and shrill, but we must not on that account undervalue the importance of his prophecy or its influence on his generation.

Carlyle's greatest work, however, was in interpretative history. Besides the *French Revolution*, he edited *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), and wrote the *Life of John Sterling* (1851), and the *History of Frederick II* (1858-65). The only other work of importance was his *Reminiscences*, published after his death.

During his later years honors were heaped upon Carlyle. In 1865 he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, and in 1874 he was decorated with the Prussian Order, "Pour le Merite." After his wife's death in 1866, however, he was lonely and unhappy. He wrote little during his last years, and seemed more than ready

for death, though he lived on to 1881. He was buried among his people at Ecclefechan.

Works. Carlyle was at his best when he was describing men and the atmosphere that surrounds great events. His word-pictures of Coleridge, DeQuincey, Daniel Webster, Tennyson, are masterpieces in themselves, as are his descriptions of different crowds — now taking the Bastille, now moving restless and talkative about the Palais Royal, or, led by Cromwell and stern conscience, singing their hymn, “strong and great,” at the foot of Doon Hill. Carlyle’s value as a historian is lessened by his lack of cool, “historical” judgment; he was too apt, not to find a conclusion from the facts, but to find and emphasize the facts that supported his theory; and his love of the picturesque played havoc with his sense of proportion. In spite of these defects, however, he presented men and affairs so vividly that he is still widely read for history as well as for his style. The chief value, however, lies in his style: vivid, rugged, tempestuous. Saturated with German idioms and fond of unusual, sudden expressions, he often falls into a manner that, while it arrests our attention, pleases only his special lovers. What really counts most is his vivid, figurative language; in one keen phrase he strikes off the essential character of a man or an event — as when he calls Coleridge a “kind of Magus, girt in mystery and enigma,” or speaks of Webster’s “amorphous, crag-like face.” One of the best examples of his power of vivid description is the picture of Night as seen by Teufelsdröckh from his tower:

That stifled hum of Midnight, when Traffic has lain down

to rest; and the chariot-wheels of Vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to Halls roofed in; and only Vice and Misery, to prowl or to moan like nightbirds, are abroad: that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick Life, is heard in Heaven! Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapors, and putrefaction, and unimaginable gases, what a Fermenting-vat lies simmering and hid! The joyful and the sorrowful are there; men are dying there, men are being born; men are praying,—on the other side of a brick partition, men are cursing; and around them all is the vast, void Night. . . . Upwards of five hundred thousand two-legged animals without feathers lie around us, in horizontal positions; their heads all in nightcaps, and full of the foolishest dreams. Riot cries aloud, and staggers and swaggers in his rank dens of shame; and the Mother, with streaming hair, kneels over her pallid dying infant, whose cracked lips only her tears now moisten. . . . All these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them;—crammed in, like salted fish in their barrel;—or weltering, shall I say, like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggling to get its *head* above the others: *such* work goes on under that smoke-counterpane!

The central idea of Carlyle's "gospel" has been already indicated. His highly figurative language, as might be supposed, sets forth admirably his emotional exhortations. A good example of his whole doctrine, as well as of his emotional style, is contained in the chapter on "Reward" in *Past and Present*: "Labor, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. . . . Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother: see thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving: sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Body-guard of the Empire of Mankind. . . . Thou too, shalt

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return *home* in honor; to thy far-distant Home, in honor; doubt it not,— if in the battle thou keep thy shield!"

JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900).

In many ways unlike Carlyle, Ruskin was nevertheless like the Scottish prophet in one great respect: his detestation of materialism and his championship of honest labor.



JOHN RUSKIN

From a sketch by himself, published in the "Life and Work of John Ruskin," by W. G. Collingwood, M.A. By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"I grew also daily more and more sure," he says in *Præterita*, . . . "that the only constant form of pure religion was in useful work, faithful love, and stintless charity." "No other man in England," Carlyle wrote of him, . . . "has in him the divine rage against iniquity, falsity, and baseness that Ruskin has, and that every man ought to have." Unlike Carlyle, however, Ruskin had a very artistic nature: during the earlier part

of his maturity nearly all of his work was in the field of art, whether in painting or in writing about art;¹ in his

¹ Ruskin belonged to the group called "Pre-Raphaelites," men who strove to revive the "simplicity of nature" in the artists before Raphael and the Renaissance.

later writings, more definitely in the moral field, he would admit of no true usefulness without beauty and of no true beauty without usefulness; and he developed a beautiful style.

Life. Ruskin, the son of a well-to-do wine-merchant, was born in London on February 8, 1819. His education, largely at home, was strict but sympathetic. Allowed few toys, he developed a keen imagination — so that “I . . . could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colors of my carpet”; “summarily whipped” if he cried or tumbled on the stairs, he “soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion”; and forced by his mother to learn much of the Bible and to read it all, aloud, once a year, — “to that discipline — patient, accurate, resolute — I owe,” he says, “not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature.” This early education, if to it is added his fondness for drawing and his love of nature, gives almost a complete idea of the kind of man Ruskin came to be. In 1836 he entered Oxford, where he did well, but weak health forced him to leave the university before he took a degree. To add to his suffering, he was shy, sensitive, and had an unhappy way of falling in love — being “reduced to a heap of white ashes,” he called it. None of his love affairs, not even his marriage, turned out well.

While at Oxford Ruskin began to attract attention by his writing, especially by some articles in Loudon's *Architectural Magazine*. His first great work, however,

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was *Modern Painters* (1843), the result of two years in Italy. Four additional volumes appeared in 1846-1860; and though the first volume met with much hostile criticism, the author was recognized as a foremost writer on art. Other works in the same field were *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1850), and *Stones of Venice* (1851-53). In 1869 Ruskin was appointed Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, and for the next fifteen years he continued to lecture and write on art — such books as *Lectures on Art* (1870), *Mornings in Florence* (1875-77), and *St. Mark's Rest* (1884).

As early as 1862, however, Ruskin began to figure as a moral teacher. *Unto This Last* was his first work in this field. It was soon followed by *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) and *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866). But it must not be supposed that he was working in two separate fields; his works on art are full of his doctrines of simplicity, genuineness, and usefulness, and his "preaching" is full of examples from the field of art. Like Carlyle, he grew impatient; and as Carlyle had railed against sham and idleness, he railed against "the deforming mechanism" of modern cities. "I should like," he says in *Fors Clavigera*, "to destroy and rebuild the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery, and the East End of London; and to destroy, without rebuilding, the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York." Still, though he often overstated the case till he became ludicrous, the value of his insistence on simple virtues can hardly be exaggerated. He was an inspiration to many who did not wholly agree with him in detail. He himself said, "You cannot judge

with judgment if you have not the sun in your spirit and passion in your heart." He realized, in other words, that mere intellect cannot take the place of spiritual insight; and, led by him, many came to realize the same great truth.

One of the most interesting phases of Ruskin's reform-work was his attempt to do practical things. He broke stones on the road; he swept street-crossings; he started a model tea-shop; he founded linen-industries; and he established a model printing-house. Finally, in *Fors Clavigera* (1871-78), a series of public letters to workingmen, he set forth the scheme of his Company of St. George. The company, which was never formed, was

to organize model communities throughout England — "to deliver the people from all the moral and physical abominations of city life, and plant them again on the soil of an England purified from steam, from filth, and from destitution." Too visionary and too premature to succeed, Ruskin's ideas, in modified form, are bearing



RUSKIN'S GRAVE, CONISTON

fruit in countless practical schemes of the present century.

The only other writing that Ruskin did was *Præterita* (1885-89), a sort of autobiography, suggested by Professor Charles Eliot Norton. His last years were spent quietly at Brantwood, on Lake Coniston, where he died, January 20, 1900. He was buried, according to his wish, without black pall, in Coniston churchyard.

Works. In all Ruskin's writings, whether on art or morality, the chief excellence lies in two things: his beautiful style and his simple sincerity. A passage from the Preface to *Modern Painters* gives an excellent idea of his power over language:

Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. . . . Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.

Ruskin's great earnestness, as well as the paternal manner that grew upon him, is better illustrated by the following paragraph from the chapter on "War" in *The Crown of Wild Olive*:

You women of England are all now shrieking with one voice,—you and your clergymen together,—because you hear of your Bibles being attacked. If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them. . . . The Bible tells you to dress plainly,—and you are mad for finery; the Bible tells you to have pity on the poor,—and you crush them under your carriage-wheels; the Bible tells you to do judgment and justice,—and you do not know, nor care to know, so much as what the Bible word “justice” means. Do but learn so much of God’s truth as that comes to; know what He means when He tells you to be just: and teach your sons, that their bravery is but a fool’s boast, and their deeds but a firebrand’s tossing, unless they are indeed Just men, and Perfect in the Fear of God;—and you will soon have no more war, unless it be indeed such as is willed by Him, of whom, though Prince of Peace, it is also written, “In Righteousness He doth judge, and make war.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888).

Another great writer who had a message for the people of Victoria’s day was Matthew Arnold. What he particularly attacked was the intellectual narrowness and the self-sufficiency of Englishmen. The only true remedy, he held, was culture — not mere book-learning, but the kind of culture which should make for sanity, dignity, accessibility to ideas, the culture which he described by Swift’s phrase “sweetness and light.” Arnold is identified with the best Oxford tradition.

As a prophet he seems insignificant beside Carlyle and Ruskin, who have been called the English Isaiah and Jeremiah; but he is a master of lucid prose — prose that itself illustrates the culture which he championed; and he ranks high among the poets of his time.

Life. Arnold was born at Laleham, just west of

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London, in 1822. Six years later his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, became head-master of Rugby—the famous head-master of *Tom Brown's School Days*,—and there and at Oxford the boy received his chief education. He won the Newdigate Prize for poetry at Oxford, but it was some time later that he came into liter-



MATTHEW ARNOLD

ary prominence. After about six years spent in teaching at Rugby and in serving as private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, he was appointed, in 1851, an Inspector of Schools, a position at which he worked hard for over thirty years.

Though he published some of his best poems in 1849 and 1852, he was not widely recognized till 1853, when his book called *Poems*

by Matthew Arnold, a New Edition, brought him deserved fame. The book included, besides earlier pieces of merit, *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The Scholar-Gypsy*, and *Philomela*, as well as his famous preface on poetry. In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, a position which he held for ten years. After 1860, however, he wrote little verse.

Arnold's first work in prose was books on education.

In 1861 and 1862 he published his well-known lectures on *Translating Homer*, and in 1865 his *Essays in Criticism* set him among the first essayists of his day. These earlier works had already shown a tendency to point out "the intellectual failings of his own nation," but it was not until *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) that he entered directly on his mission of attacking what he believed to be national weaknesses. *Friendship's Garland* (1871), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and *God and the Bible* (1875) have kindred purposes: they attack the narrowness of English society, politics, and religion, and preach "sweetness and light." Later, Arnold turned again to more purely literary work, and his *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (1888) include much of his best writing. This was his last publication, for he died in the same year. He was buried in Laleham churchyard.

Works. In his preface on poetry Arnold insisted that the "total impression" of the piece was the really important thing; and he condemned what he called the "caprice" of contemporary, "rhetorical" poetry. He caught the spirit of the classics as no other English poets have and in his best work reflected a classical dignity and simplicity. This quality has prevented his becoming very popular; he appeals to the academic few; but to those who understand him and his Oxford traditions, his poems are not only a source of delight, but a spiritual inspiration. The Persian tale of *Sohrab and Rustum*, telling how Rustum unwittingly slew his son, fighting in the enemy's ranks, is probably his greatest work, but such pieces as *The Scholar-Gypsy*, *Dover Beach*, and *The Future* are more characteristic. It

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would be unfair to Arnold to quote a fragment, thus obscuring "the total impression," but one of his best poems, *Requiescat*, is so brief that it may be quoted entire:

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew:
In quiet she reposes;
Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound;
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath;
To-night she doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Of Arnold's prose attacks on the weaknesses of his times, *Friendship's Garland* is perhaps the best, for it has a lightness and satiric humor that is too often wanting in his other writings. *Culture and Anarchy*, however, is better known, both for its doctrine of "sweetness and light" and for its division of Englishmen (except the cultured few) into: (1) Barbarians, the pleasure-loving aristocracy; (2) Philistines, the narrow, material middle-class; and (3) Populace, the "vast residuum." As the years pass, however, people are realizing more and more that Arnold's chief merit lies in his

criticisms of poets — especially of Byron and Wordsworth — and in his urbane, lucid style.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870).

If we begin to make a list of the extraordinary personages in the novels of Dickens, we soon realize as we record the names of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Micawber, Quilp, Fagin, Mr. Snagsby, Squeers, Sairey Gamp, that no English novelist was his equal in creating people who are "characters." This power, together with the author's humor, gives his books perennial interest among all sorts of readers. In his own day the earnest, if somewhat exaggerated and sentimental, attack on prisons and boarding schools which many¹ of his books made, won them an additional popularity.

Dickens himself was literally of the streets; he knew the life that he depicted. And though the charge is often brought against him that he did not understand people of refinement and breeding, we must not imagine, on that account, that he was vulgar, as some glibly assert. He reached more hearts than any writer of his time; and he did this because he overflowed with humor and sympathy.

Life. Dickens was born in Portsea on February 12, 1812. His father, from whom he drew Mr. Micawber, never was able to support his large family; and the only visitors who ever came to the mother's "Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies" were creditors. At eleven the boy was set to pasting labels on bottles in a

¹ Such as *Little Dorrit*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

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shoe-blackening factory. Later, he was sent to school for a short time, but he never received a good education; and at sixteen he tried his hand at newspaper reporting. His success in this field is the best evidence of his natural ability; he himself ascribed the success to his love for a girl who was the original of Dora in *David Copperfield*: he says that he went at his work "with a determination to overcome all the difficulties, which fairly lifted me up into that newspaper life, and floated me away over a hundred men's heads." Unlike David, however, Dickens did not win his Dora, and some years later, in 1836, he married Catherine Hogarth.

By this time he had become more than a reporter. In 1835 his *Sketches by Boz*, which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* and in the *Chronicle*, attracted so much attention that he was asked to write some articles which later developed into the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-37). From now on he turned to novel writing, which he continued with increasing success till his death. *Oliver Twist* appeared in 1837, *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1839, *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840, and *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841. These books, like most of Dickens's later works, came out serially, and so great was their vogue that people who could not read or who could not afford to buy them, gathered in groups to hear them read aloud. One old char-woman told Dickens's mother-in-law that she thought "that three or four men must have put together *Dombey*!"—or, as Mr. Chesterton puts it, "Dickens was evidently a great man; unless he was a thousand men." Among the most famous of the books that followed *Barnaby Rudge* may be mentioned



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CHARLES DICKENS

From a painting by David Maclise

The Christmas Carol (1843), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Bleak House* (1852-3), *Little Dorrit* (1855-7), and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859).

With the money he made from these publications Dickens bought Gad's Hill Place, near Rochester, the familiar country of his *Pickwick* stories, and there spent the last ten years of his life. He died on June 9, 1870, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

In thinking of Dickens's appearance we are too apt to remember the picture of the middle-aged man who lectured in America in the sixties. As a young man he was "a fine little fellow," with what Forster calls an "eager, restless, energetic outlook."

Works. With the exception of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which, depending largely on an intricate plot, is unlike Dickens's other works, his novels owe their fame chiefly to two things: the *characters* and the *scenes*. Every one knows the characters, some of whom have been mentioned above; and few readers are without the experience of wishing that Mr. Pickwick or Sairey Gamp,—to say nothing of many others,—would always be reappearing on the next page. The scenes, moreover, though they are somewhat fitted together in the development of the plot, are, like the characters, especially interesting in themselves. The reader does not care much, for instance, whether the scene at the cricket match in *Pickwick* is going to lead to further developments; what he wants is to have the fat boy perpetually going to sleep, Mr. Wardle perpetually rousing him with an oath, Mr. Jingle perpetually making astonishing remarks, and Mr.

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Pickwick perpetually being imposed upon. Such scenes that carry their own interest, whether they are as serious as the shipwreck in *David Copperfield*, as pathetic as the death of Jo in *Bleak House*, or as amusing as the Fezziwig's Ball in the *Christmas Carol*, abound in all of Dickens's books and have the rare power of increasing the reader's interest each time they are re-read.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863).

Dickens appeals to both young and old readers. Thackeray, with a vein of satire in all his works, appeals more especially to older readers. He does not so much



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

After a photograph made in New York by Alman. From the collection of the late Judge Charles P. Daly. Lent by Mrs. Henry R. Hoyt

depict the fun of society as *make* fun of it. This does not mean, however, that he was chiefly a fault-finder; it means merely that he faced the facts of life, that he detested the sham and vanity of society, and that, because he had a sense of humor, he laughed rather than railed at mankind. But he had a great sympathetic heart; and he put as much of himself into such lovable characters as Dobbin and

Colonel Newcome as he did into such selfish persons as Becky Sharp and Beatrix Esmond. The last paragraph of his *Book of Snobs* gives a fair idea of his outlook on life: "To laugh at such is *Mr. Punch's* business. May he laugh honestly, hit no foul blow, and tell the truth when at his very broadest grin — never forgetting that if Fun is good, Truth is still better, and Love best of all."

Life. Thackeray was born in Calcutta, on July 18, 1811, but he was sent to England when he was only six. After a good education at Charterhouse School,¹ he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he made some good friends, among them Tennyson, but he left without a degree, traveled abroad, studied law for a short time in London and art in Paris, till finally, in 1835 he went, like Dickens, into journalism. He did not rise, however, with the easy success of Dickens; and though his sketches and stories in *Fraser's Magazine* (among them the *Yellowplush Papers*), as well as his poems and *Snob* papers in *Punch*, brought him some fame, he was a struggling journalist and artist till 1848, when *Vanity Fair* reached a large public. Mrs. Carlyle said he "beat Dickens out of the world." From now on Thackeray's success was hardly less than that of his rival, and though he lived only fourteen years more, he wrote in that time such famous books as *Pendennis* (1850), *Henry Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1855), *The English Humourists* (1851), *The Four Georges* (1856), and *The Virginians* (1857).

During this material success, however, which with the

¹ A picture is given in the "Greyfriars School" in *Pendennis*.

fruits of a lecture tour in America left Thackeray fairly well-to-do, he suffered a good deal. Of a highly sensitive nature, he felt keenly adverse criticisms; while he suffered even more from fallings out with some of his friends and from the misery of his wife, whose mind failed in 1840. The pathos in his life, as in his books,



THACKERAY'S GRAVE, KENSAL GREEN

is quite as prominent as the humor. Only fifty-two, he died on December 24, 1863.

Works. The plots of Thackeray's novels are even less conspicuous than those of Dickens's books; the interest, as in the case of Thackeray's master, Fielding, centers in the characters. Though these are often overdrawn, with satiric effect, they are rarely quite extraordinary, like Uriah Heep or Quilp. They appeal to the reader who is impatient of exaggerations, who likes to study pictures painted with a fine brush, who prefers "that form of fiction which exposes the follies and hypocrisy of mankind rather than its great vices and great virtues." Such readers prefer, too, the quiet, subtle humor, of which Thackeray was a master, to the more boisterous fun of Dickens.

Henry Esmond and *The Virginians*, its sequel, differ from Thackeray's other work in that they are historical novels, with a moving story. *Beatrice Esmond*, however, as some of the minor characters, shows that, even in this

kind of writing, Thackeray's main interest was in the lights and shadows of character. Full scope is given to this interest in *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes*, with the result that these books, crowded with "real" persons, make the greatest appeal to all lovers of Thackeray.

Though Thackeray's novels are his most important writings, he was an essayist of distinction, at his best in *The English Humourists*; and some of his poems, such as *The Canc-Bottomed Chair*, are among the best verse of their kind. All through his works, moreover,—even in the bitterest scenes of *Vanity Fair*,—one feels the kindly presence of the author, whose lines in *The End of the Play* were not far from a statement of his own ideal:

Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880).

Another great Victorian novelist was Mary Ann Evans, who wrote under the name of George Eliot.

Life. George Eliot was born at Arbury, Warwickshire, on November 22, 1819. Here and at Nuneaton, where she went to school, she saw the life she later so vividly described in many of her books. After her mother's death in 1836, household cares in a not very sympathetic family occupied much of her time, but she studied a great deal—especially religious questions. Her first literary work, in fact, was in the religious field. She began to write as early as 1840, but her first important work was a translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*

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(1846). Her first fiction was *Amos Barton* (1856), published in *Blackwood's Magazine* and later included in *Scenes from Clerical Life*. *Adam Bede* followed in 1859 and met with tremendous success. In 1860 came *The Mill on the Floss*, in 1861 *Silas Marner*, and in 1862-3 *Romola*. These books, among her greatest,



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GEORGE ELIOT

were written during periods of depression. At times she felt as if she should never see her way through; and after *Romola* she wrote, "I began it a young woman,—I finished it an old woman." Writing meant exhausting work to her; as in the case of Keats, "a virtue went away" from her into everything that she wrote. After *Romola* George Eliot's interest turned to poetry, and

she wrote *The Spanish Gypsy* in 1868; while a further volume of verse, including *Jubal*, was published in 1874. But she kept at fiction, too, finishing *Felix Holt* in 1866, *Middlemarch* in 1872, and *Daniel Deronda* in 1876. Four years later she died from an attack of throat trouble.

Works. A sentence of George Eliot's shows strikingly the character of her work: "When a subject has begun to grow in me, I suffer terribly until it has

wrought itself out — become a complete organism." In other words, there is always *development* in her characters. The characters of Dickens and Thackeray often change very little during the course of a whole book; that is, Fagin is always the same scheming Jew, Beatrix Esmond is always the same beautiful "leopard." Silas Marner, on the contrary, grows at first suspicious when he has been unfairly suspected and hounded out of Lantern Yard, and finally opens his heart again through the love of a little girl. Similarly, Tito Milema, a fine young Greek in *Romola*, goes from good to bad and from bad to worse as he develops the habit of concealing first little things, finally serious things, from his wife. In most of George Eliot's works similar examples are abundant. It must not be supposed, however, that these characters are the puppets of events over which they have no control. In *Silas Marner*, for instance, it is Marner's miserly weakness that, quite as much as events, brings on his way of life. Some novelists picture their characters as bandied about by fate, by "the clutch of circumstance," others picture them as saved or ruined by their own strength or weakness; George Eliot combined the two forces, with masterly skill: the development of the story seems to bring about the growth of the characters, and yet the growth of the characters seems to be the cause of the development of the plot. In this way she pictured a process that is life itself; and because she understood the intricate, interwoven influences,—love, work, habit, trivial things,—that cause change and growth in human beings, she wrote novels that must always be interesting.

OTHER WRITERS OF THE VICTORIAN AGE.

Besides the greatest names of the Victorian Age, there are almost literally countless others of sufficient importance to receive considerable mention in a large book. One passes unwillingly over such novelists as CHARLOTTE BRONTË, CHARLES KINGSLEY, BULWER LYTTON, DISRAELI, CHARLES READE, and TROLLOPE,—to say nothing of authors who have won great fame by an outstanding book.¹ The same may be said for the poets — MRS. BROWNING, FITZGERALD, MORRIS, ROSSETTI, and EDWIN ARNOLD; for the scientists — DARWIN, SPENCER, and HUXLEY; for the historians — FREEMAN, GREEN, GROTE, LECKY, and SYMONDS; and for the essayists — NEWMAN, PATER, BAGEHOT, and LESLIE STEPHEN. Even after these names we might make another list, quite as long, of names almost as important. Here we shall have to content ourselves with three writers, who, as the century recedes, seem more and more to deserve special mention.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909) possessed great skill in handling various verse-forms and in combining pleasant sounds. In addition, he had command of a remarkable vocabulary. *Technically*, he was a great poet, one of the greatest in all English literature; but his poetry is usually vague and sometimes meaningless: its excellence lies almost wholly in its sound. Of his longer poems, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1864), modeled after the style of Greek drama, is generally considered

¹ Such as Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*, Hughes's *Tom Brown*, and Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*.

the best. Many of his shorter poems have great beauty, none more than *Itylus*, based on the old Greek story of Procne and Philomela.¹ A stanza from one of the choruses in *Atalanta* gives a good idea of the melodious charm of Swinburne's poetry:

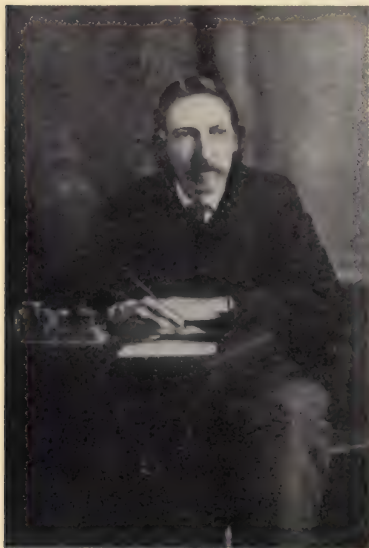
When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909) came slowly into fame, but he is now recognized as one of the chief English novelists, while his poems have warm, if comparatively few, admirers. A great deal of his strength lies in his ability to draw subtle distinctions and in his power of compressing his meaning into few words. Both of these qualities, of course, recommend him to a special class of readers rather than to the average man. His stories are developed almost wholly by the characters in them—that is, the strength and weakness of persons brings about the situations. Perhaps his most characteristic novel is *The Egoist* (1879), but *Richard Feverel* (1859) and *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) probably reach a wider circle of readers.

¹ Philomela, the nightingale, reproaches Procne, the "swallow-sister," for forgetting Itylus, her first-born. Notice the allusion to the same myth in the quotation from *Atalanta*.

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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894) is best known as a novelist, the author of such deservedly popular tales as *Treasure Island* (1883), *Kidnapped* (1886), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). He was a lover of romantic adventure, a man who understood out-of-doors and had the secret of perpetual youth in his heart;



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

and he enters into his stories with such zest that he carries young and old readers with him. A large part of Stevenson's success lay in his power over language and in his simple generous nature — two qualities which are revealed not only in his novels, but in his essays and poems. Suffering most of his life, forced on account of his health first to abandon his native Scotland and finally to banish himself to

Samoa, in the South Seas, he had a way, as one critic points out, of counting his few well hours the normal thing. Himself in need, one would suppose, of sympathy and encouragement, he spent most of his days making the world cheerful. His genuine cheerfulness and consuming hatred of sullenness are especially well expressed in the little poem —

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain: —
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in.

THE PRESENT DAY.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, a new age undoubtedly began. It has hardly yet reached its fullness, however; perhaps the only "central idea" that can at present be discerned is *independence*, a tendency of many writers to defy tradition; but this very feature implies a diversity which we, in the midst of it, may not profitably attempt to sum up in a few phrases. In historical and critical writing, for instance, men have been inclined to discard traditional formulas, such as the writers of Arnold's time used in making their judgments, and to appraise history and literature, not as they should be, but as they are.



THE MANSE, COLINTON, WHERE STEVENSON PASSED MUCH OF HIS BOYHOOD

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This frankness, however, is not an unmixed blessing, for it sometimes brings with it an impulse to be extraordinary at all costs.¹

Narrative writing, latterly, has been undergoing great changes. Though the Victorian type of novel has been continued by THOMAS HARDY, who first attracted notice with *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), and by WILLIAM DE MORGAN, in such novels as *Joseph Vance* and *Alice for Short*, the tendency has been to concentrate on social problems which produce striking, dramatic situations. This type is seen to advantage in such novels as H. G. WELLS's *Tono Bungay* and *Marriage*. It would be absurd, however, to assume that the "problem novel" is the dominant type when such different kinds of stories as those of BARRIE, CONAN DOYLE, W. J. LOCKE, and ARNOLD BENNETT, to say nothing of a host of others, reveal the variety in present-day fiction. Much fiction, furthermore, is now in the form of the "short story," largely developed by Stevenson after French models and eagerly taken up on both sides of the Atlantic. Few have worked in this field better than RUDYARD KIPLING, well known in his *Many Inventions*, *The Day's Work*, and other collections.²

One of the most noticeable features of modern times is the revival of the drama. Here, as in fiction, conti-

¹ This love of the bizarre may be abundantly observed in the writings of G. K. Chesterton, who, however, has done a great deal, in his less fantastic moments, towards rousing his readers to honest opinions.

² It should be noted that much of the best modern fiction in English is by Americans, especially Henry James, W. D. Howells, Marion Crawford, and Edith Wharton.

mental writers have had a great influence: the "problem play," following Ibsen, is possibly more familiar than the "problem novel." As fiction, however, has not been limited to one type, so the drama has invaded nearly every kind of life and is peculiarly fitted to express the intense, dramatic situations of a busy, realistic age. WILDE, PINERO, BARRIE, SHAW, and GALSWORTHY are the most prominent writers of modern prose plays that both act and read well. An interesting development in the drama has been the Irish revival, under YEATS, SYNGE, and others. Many of the Irish plays are in verse; and some English poets, notably STEPHEN PHILLIPS, have tried their hand at dramatic verse.

The majority of good modern verse, however, is lyric, though recently ALFRED NOYES in his romantic epic *Drake* and JOHN MASEFIELD in such narratives as the *Dauber* have proved that long poems can still find a public. Besides the above, prominent names among recent English poets are WILLIAM WATSON, FRANCIS THOMPSON, HENRY NEWBOLT, A. E. HOUSMAN, and RUDYARD KIPLING. Of these Kipling is the only one who, so far, seems quite secure against oblivion. His verse has a vividness and a vigor which have been imitated in vain by the majority of his contemporaries. A good example of his style, as well as a sort of summary of the practical, business-like age which he represents, is the last part of "England's Answer" in *The Seven Seas*:

Now must ye speak to your kinsmen and they must speak to
you,
After the use of the English, in straight-flung words and few.
Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,

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Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
Stand to your work and be wise — certain of sword and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of men.

CONCLUSION.

Looking back over the whole history of our literature, we realize its great variety probably more than anything else. For convenience we group men into periods, and we may even try to group all the periods into one literature, but we are constantly amazed by the mere number of different thoughts and emotions that our literature expresses. If we think only of chief names, — such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Johnson, Wordsworth, Tennyson, — we cannot help wondering at the wealth of material, not only from the point of view of quality, but from that of diversity. The more we study, the more we wonder at the fullness and persistence of life in the Anglo-Saxon race. This persistence of life, this constant re-birth of genius, should reassure us, as we look back, that English literature is not merely a thing of the past, but of the present and future — a living thing, carrying noble and imperishable traditions.

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1830-1837	WILLIAM IV Reform Bill	T. B. MACAULAY, 1800-1859	Lays of Ancient Rome	History of England
1832	Abolition of Slavery in British West Indies	E. Bulwer Lytton, 1803-1873		Last Days of Pompeii
1837-1001	VICTORIA Chartist Agitations	B. Disraeli, 1804-1881	Sonnets from the Portuguese	Coningsby
1837, 1842	Repeal of the Corn Laws	Elizabeth B. Browning, 1806-1861	Ring and the Book	
1846	Revolution in France: Abdication of Louis Philippe	ROBERT BROWNING, 1812-1889	Idylls of the King	
1848	Crimean War	ALFRED TENNYSON, 1809-1892	Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam	
1853-55	Mutiny in India	Edward Fitzgerald, 1809-1883		Origin of Species
1857	American Civil War	Charles Darwin, 1809-1882		David Copperfield
1861-1865	Second Electoral Reform Bill	CHARLES DICKENS, 1812-1870		
1867	Suez Canal Opened	WILLIAM M. THACKERAY, 1811-1863	The End of the Play	Vanity Fair
1869	Elementary Education Act: Government Schools Established	Charlotte Brontë, 1815-1855		Jane Eyre
1870				

CHRONOLOGY —(Continued)

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1877	Victoria proclaimed Empress of India	Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810-1865 THOMAS CARLYLE, 1795-1881		Cranford
1870-1871	Franco-Prussian War	JOHN RUSKIN, 1819-1900 J. H. Newman, 1801-1890		Sartor Resartus
1877-1878	Russo-Turkish War	MATTHEW ARNOLD, 1822-1888 A. H. Clough, 1819-1861	Sohrab and Rustum Miscellaneous Poems	Sesame and Lilies The Idea of a University Culture and Anarchy
1884	Third Electoral Reform Bill	Charles Reade, 1814-1884		The Cloister and the Hearth Westward Ho! The Warden
1886	First Home Rule Bill	Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875 Anthony Trollope, 1815-1882 GEORGE ELIOT, 1819-1880	The Spanish Gypsy	Silas Marner
1882-1898	Mahdi Revolt in the Sudan	Thomas Hughes, 1823-1896		Tom Brown's School Days

HISTORY		LITERATURE		
DATES		AUTHOR	REPRESENTATIVE POETRY	REPRESENTATIVE PROSE
1898	First Hague Peace Conference	Richard Blackmore, 1825-1900		Lorna Doone
1890-1902	Boer War	Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903 T. H. Huxley, 1825-1895 Walter Pater, 1839-1894		First Principles Man's Place in Nature Marius the Epicurean
1901-1910	EDWARD VII	D. G. Rossetti, 1828-1882	The Blessed Damozel	House of the Wolfings
1910-	GEORGE V	William Morris, 1834-1896 A. C. Swinburne, 1837-1909	The Earthly Paradise Atalanta in Calydon	Essay on Jonson
1910-11	Constitutional Crisis: the Parliament Bill	Leslie Stephen, 1832-1904		Hours in a Library Richard Feverel
1913-14	Ulster Crisis in Ireland	George Meredith, 1828-1909 Thomas Hardy, 1840- Austin Dobson, 1840- Andrew Lang, 1844-1912	Love in the Valley Beau Brocade Helen of Troy	Tess Essays Myth, Ritual, and Religion
1914-	The War of the Nations	R. L. Stevenson, 1850-1894	The Song of Rahéro The Seven Seas	Treasure Island
1914	Panama Canal Opened	Rudyard Kipling, 1865-		The Jungle Book

BOOKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING.

[NOTE. Selections from the chief works of nineteenth century authors are so numerous and so accessible that in most cases only a standard edition is cited.]

LITERATURE. MACAULAY. *Life and Letters*, 2 vols., by Trevelyan (Harper), ranks with Lockhart's *Scott*. A good briefer biography is by Morrison (English Men of Letters Series). *Works*, 8 vols., edited by Lady Trevelyan (Longmans).

BROWNING. *Life*, by Sharp (Great Writers Series); also by Chesterton (English Men of Letters Series). The *Cambridge Edition* (Houghton Mifflin) is a good one-volume edition of Browning's complete poems. Corson's *Introduction to the Study of Browning's Poetry* (Heath) is very useful.

TENNYSON. *Life*, by Lyall (English Men of Letters Series). Poems, complete in the *Globe Edition* (Macmillan). See also Dowden's "Tennyson and Browning" in *Studies in Literature* (Scribner).

DICKENS. The standard life is by Forster, 2 vols. (Scribner). See also Chesterton's *Charles Dickens* (Dodd, Mead). One of the best editions of the novels is the *Gadshill Edition*, 38 vols. (Scribner).

THACKERAY. *Life*, by Trollope (English Men of Letters Series). *Works*, ed. by Anne Thackeray Ritchie, in the *Biographical Edition*, 13 vols. (Harper).

CARLYLE. A good short life is by Garnett (Great Writers Series). *Works*, *Centenary Edition* (Scribner). See also MacMechan, "Introduction" to *HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP* in the *Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn).

RUSKIN. *Life*, by Harrison (English Men of Letters Series). See also Ruskin's autobiography, *PRAETERITA*. *Works*, *Brantwood Edition*, 20 vols. (Longmans).

ARNOLD. *Life*, by Paul (English Men of Letters Series). *Works*, 14 vols. (Macmillan).

ELIOT. Life, by Leslie Stephen (English Men of Letters Series). Works, *Standard Edition*, 21 vols. (Blackwood).

STEVENSON. Life, by Balfour, 2 vols. (Scribner). Works, *Biographical Edition*, 25 vols. (Scribner).

SWINBURNE'S *Poems* are published, in 6 vols., by Harper. *Select Poems* in the *Belles Lettres Series* (Heath).

MEREDITH'S Works are published, in 18 vols., by Scribner.

The works of other Victorian writers are easily accessible, though not always in cheap editions. The better short poems are included in many anthologies, such as Manly's *English Poetry* (Ginn), *The Oxford Book of Verse* (Clarendon Press), *Century Readings* (Century), and, especially, Stedman's *Victorian Anthology* (Houghton Mifflin).

SUGGESTED READINGS.

Macaulay's HISTORY, Vol. I; Essays on FREDERICK THE GREAT, CLIVE, BACON, JOHNSON, MILTON, ADDISON; LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Browning's CAVALIER TUNES; THE LOST LEADER; HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX; EVELYN HOPE; LOVE AMONG THE RUINS; A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S; DE GUSTIBUS; HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD; HOME THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA; SAUL; MY STAR; BY THE FIRE-SIDE; THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL; INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP; THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER; THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN; THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS; THE GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL; CHILDE ROLAND; FRA LIPPO LIPPI; ANDREA DEL SARTO; ABT VOGLER; RABBI BEN EZRA; PROSPICE; THE RING AND THE BOOK; HERVÉ RIEL; PHEIDIPPIDES; EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO.

Tennyson's THE DYING SWAN; THE LADY OF SHALOTT; THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER; THE PALACE OF ART; THE LOTUS-EATERS; ULYSSES; TITHONUS; LOCKSLEY HALL; LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER; THE DAY-DREAM; SIR GALAHAD; "BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"; ENOCH ARDEN; THE BROOK; songs in THE PRINCESS; ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON; THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE; IN ME-

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MORIAM; IDYLLS OF THE KING (especially "The Coming of Arthur," "Gareth and Lynette," and "The Passing of Arthur"); THE REVENGE; TIRESIAS; TO VIRGIL; THE MAKING OF MAN; and CROSSING THE BAR.

Dickens's OLIVER TWIST, DAVID COPPERFIELD, TALE OF TWO CITIES, BLEAK HOUSE, DOMBEY AND SON, PICKWICK, and CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Thackeray's HENRY ESMOND, THE NEWCOMES, VANITY FAIR, THE ENGLISH HUMOURISTS.

Carlyle's HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP; SARTOR RESARTUS; FRENCH REVOLUTION (selections); ESSAY ON BURNS. A good introductory idea of Carlyle may be gained from the selections in *Little Masterpieces* (Doubleday Page).

Ruskin's SESAME AND LILIES; CROWN OF WILD OLIVE; "St. Mark's" in STONES OF VENICE.

Arnold's SOHRAB AND RUSTUM; FORSAKEN MERMAN; PHILOMELA; SCHOLAR-GYPSY; DOVER BEACH; RUGBY CHAPEL; THE FUTURE; and the essays on TRANSLATING HOMER, WORDSWORTH, BYRON, and HEINE.

Eliot's SILAS MARNER; MILL ON THE FLOSS; ROMOLA.

Stevenson's TREASURE ISLAND; DAVID BALFOUR; MASTER OF BALLANTRAE; "A Lodging for the Night" (in NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS); "Aes Triplex" (in VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE); LETTER TO FATHER DAMIEN; THE SONG OF RAHÉRO.

Meredith's DIANA OF THE CROSSWAYS; RICHARD FEVEREL; THE EGOIST.

A useful list for other Victorian writers would include the works listed in the Chronological Table for this chapter, with the addition of such short well-known poems as are found in Manly's *English Poets* (Ginn) or in the *Century Readings* (Century).

HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETC. McCarthy, *The Epoch of Reform* (Epochs of Modern History), and *History of our own Times*, 2 vols. (Harper). Oman, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (Longmans), covers the ground well. For the literary history: Saintsbury, *History of the Nineteenth Century*

<p>1800-1850</p>	<p>1850-1900</p>	<p>1900-1950</p>	<p>1950-2000</p>	<p>2000-Present</p>	<p>1900-1950</p>	<p>1950-2000</p>	<p>2000-Present</p>
<p>Victorian</p>	<p>Edwardian</p>	<p>Interwar</p>	<p>World War II</p>	<p>Post-war</p>	<p>Victorian</p>	<p>Edwardian</p>	<p>Interwar</p>
<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>
<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>
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<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>
<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>	<p>Modernism</p>

HISTORICAL CHART OF



OLD ENGLISH
MIDDLE ENGLISH
MODERN ENGLISH

Literature (Macmillan); Beers, *English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* (Holt); Dowden, *Studies in Literature* (Macmillan). See also special chapters in books recommended on p. 433.

POETRY AND FICTION. Novels dealing with mid-century problems are: Kingsley's *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, Eliot's *Silas Marner* and *Felix Holt*, and Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Bleak House*. Good poems to read in conjunction with the century's history and developments are: Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*; Mrs. Browning's *The Cry of the Children*; Edwin Markham's *The Man with the Hoe*; Henley's *England, my England*; Newbolt's *Vitai Lampada*, Kipling's *Seven Seas* and *Five Nations* (selections), and Noyes's *Wine Press*.

APPENDIX A

LITERARY FORMS.

It is impossible to distinguish exactly the different classes of literature. This is due largely to the fact that most literature is not written with a view to classification; but, even if it were, there are so many possible classifications and the border between two classes is so indefinite that careful distinction would fill a volume. Here we can speak of only the main characteristics of the chief classes.

CLASSES OF POETRY.¹

I. NARRATIVE. There are four main classes of narrative poetry: *ballad*, *epic*, *romance*, and *tale*.

(1) THE BALLAD is a short, simple narrative. It deals usually with a local hero, such as Robin Hood, and with a local incident, such as the Cheviot fight. One of the oldest kinds of poetry, it was at first in the hands of the common, "unlettered" people; most early ballads were traditional and oral;² and so the first English ballads that we possess date from about the fourteenth century, though they must have been preceded by a long line of forgotten ballads. Originally connected with song, the ballad often has more lyric than narrative interest. In modern times the name is used to cover almost any short story in verse, as in Kipling's *Ballads*.

¹ There is so much controversy about what constitutes poetry and what prose that we adopt here the only "workable" distinction: that poetry is literature in verse-form. In so far as such qualities as imagination and emotion are "poetic," much prose, of course, is poetic, and *vice versa*, much poetry is prosaic.

² For a discussion of ballad origins see p. 64.

Ballads flourished chiefly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though they continued through the sixteenth and seventeenth. Good examples of the old ballads are the *Robin Hood* collection, *Sir Patrick Spens*, *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, *Johnie Armstrong*, *Sir Hugh*, *The Three Ravens*, *Edward*, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, and *Thomas Rymer*.¹ During the later seventeenth and the eighteenth century the ballad almost disappeared from written literature,² but soon after the publication of Percy's *Reliques* (1765), it became a very popular form, especially with Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Since then it has continued to be a favorite form for narrative verse. Tennyson's *Revenge* and Kipling's *Ballad of East and West* are good examples of modern ballads.

(2) THE EPIC is a long narrative poem dealing with the real or mythical deeds of national heroes. Famous examples are Homer's *Iliad* and the English epic, *Beowulf*. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is written in imitation of classical epics, but deals, of course, with powers of heaven and hell, not with *national* figures. The distinction between the ballad and the epic may be understood by considering *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, a collection of ballads dealing with the adventures of the Sherwood outlaw. If Robin Hood had become a great national figure, the various stories of the *Gest* might have been gathered together in one long poem; but he remained a popular, local hero, and the *Gest* remained a collection of ballads. In contrast, the stories about Achilles, or Beowulf, though their primitive form is now lost, must have been first sung in something like ballad form; but as their hero grew in the national imagination, the stories would have grown in importance and dignity, till finally they were welded together and rewritten in epic form. This kind of poetry, in keeping with the subject, always employs stately verse and serious language.

Good examples of English epics, besides *Beowulf* and *Para-*

¹ All of these ballads are to be found in any good collection.

² Carey's *Sally in our Alley* and Gay's *'Twas When the Seas Were Roaring* are well-known exceptions.

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dise Lost, are Keats's *Hyperion*, Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*,¹ and Noyes's *Drake*.

(3) THE ROMANCE. A long narrative in which the interest centers in adventures that are usually fabulous or imaginary, and the hero of which acts from the motive of love or knightly service rather than of heroism. It is impossible to draw a clear line between the epic and romance. The great British epic, for instance, the Arthurian story, has come down to us chiefly in romances, because it was popular in the days of knighthood.² A good rough distinction is that the epic was written for the lord's *hall*; the romance, for the lady's *bower*.

Besides the mediæval romances (see Chap. II), the most famous examples in English are: Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake* and *Marmion*, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The word, however, is loosely used to cover such short romantic tales as Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve* and Browning's *The Flight of the Duchess*.

(4) THE TALE. This word is even more vaguely used than "romance." It is most accurately applied to short narrative poems such as those in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or in Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, but it covers, too, practically all narrative poetry that may not be classed under ballad, epic, or romance.

2. THE LYRIC. Originally, poetry that was *sung* rather than *chanted*, as was the epic. The emphasis, therefore, falls on emotion rather than on story; and, finally, on the emotion of the individual author or of the author speaking for others. In epic and ballad the subject is not only the main thing, but the author is practically negligible: we know nothing of Homer from what he says in the *Iliad*. In the lyric, on the other hand, the author is often quite as important as the subject. From its nature the lyric is necessarily a short poem. Naturally, too,

¹ Properly, an "episode" from the great Persian epic, *Shah Nameh*.

² Though Layamon's *Brut*, the first English rendering of it, is an epic.

it takes countless expressions: the intense personal feeling of Shelley in *O world, O life, O time*; the love of nature in the songs of Burns; the light fancy of Marlowe's *Come, live with me and be my love*; national courage in Campbell's *Ye mariners of England*; stately beauty in Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*; and dignified sorrow in Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*.

The Elizabethan Age, the early seventeenth century, and the nineteenth century are particularly rich in lyric poetry, whether in song or in the more stately forms of sonnet and ode. An introductory study should include at least Marlowe, Shakespeare, Sidney, Lyly, Jonson, Herrick, Herbert, Milton, Dryden, Gray, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne. In addition, such lyrical old ballads as *The Earl of Murray* should be read.

3. THE DRAMA. The essential difference between a drama and a story lies in the fact that the drama is written to be acted and spoken. A narrator may supply whatever description and explanation he sees fit; the dramatist, on the other hand, must say whatever he has to say through the persons in his drama. Yet a story which is told entirely by conversation is far from a drama; the conditions of the stage have forced on the acted story a compactness and a swiftness, and, above all, a necessity of *action*, which make the drama a special kind of literature.

The two chief divisions of drama are *tragedy* and *comedy*. The former "presents a mortal will at odds with fate"; working up to a conflict, the tragedy is completed by the overthrow of the chief figure. Comedy presents a conflict which is only apparent; the difficulties are solved and the play ends happily. The purpose of tragedy,¹ as Aristotle says, is to excite *pity* and *terror*; of comedy, to *amuse*. Both, if they deserve their names, should "hold the mirror up to nature." When they do not, they are, respectively, *melodrama* and *farce*. Melo-

¹ The word tragedy has come to be loosely used for almost any play that has a sad ending.

drama, since it usually springs from a mistaken idea of what is terrible, is perverted tragedy; but farce, in which situations and characters are purposely made unreal for humorous effect, has a logical place on the stage. Farce, however, is usually in prose. Among the forms of poetic drama should be noted the *masque*, a play in which dancing, music, and elaborate costumes have important parts. A good example is Milton's *Comus* (see p. 184). Dramatic also is *opera*, but the literary element, except in Wagner's German operas, is almost wholly subordinate to the musical.

English poetic drama flourished chiefly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹ Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Dekker, Massinger, Ford, and Webster are the chief names. Poetic drama in the late seventeenth century, the best of which was written by Dryden, had success in its own day, but is little read now; and the same may be said for later instances, such as Addison's *Cato*, Coleridge's *Remorse*, and Browning's *Strafford*. Modern poetic drama is usually written to be read and is often too lyric or didactic to make "good acting." Such plays are Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and Byron's *Manfred*; while a still wider departure is to be found in Browning's "Dramatic Monologues"—such as *Rabbi Ben Esra* and *Abt Vogler*,—dramatic only in the sense that they have the directness of a person actually speaking.

4. THE IDYLL. The word, literally, means "little picture." Originally the idyll was a sort of dramatic form, as in the *Idylls* of Theocritus and the *Eclogues* of Virgil, but even there the descriptive element, particularly of pastoral scenes, is the chief thing. The name, therefore, is most commonly applied to descriptive pastoral poetry. Good examples are Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* and Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.² Frequently portions of a poem are idyllic, as parts of Byron's *Childe Harold*.

¹ For the history of the early English drama, see p. 102.

² Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, though they are a series of "little pictures," are more nearly romances than idylls.

5. DIDACTIC POETRY. Poetry which has instruction for its chief aim. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* and Gray's *Elegy*, for example, though the former is idyllic and the latter is both idyllic and lyric, are primarily didactic: they draw a moral, teach a lesson. Frequently a poem which is chiefly narrative plainly states its moral, as Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*; in which case it may be said to have a didactic ending, though of course it cannot be classed as didactic poetry. Pope's *Essay on Criticism* is a good example of poetry which has the single purpose of instruction.

A favorite form of didactic poetry is *satire*—holding a man or a condition up to ridicule, as in Kipling's *Islanders*; but satire is often written to amuse, or for its own sake,—as in Pope's lines on "Atticus" in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*,—and then it should be classed separately, not under didactic poetry. Good examples of satire are Butler's *Hudibras*, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, and Pope's *Dunciad*.

CLASSES OF PROSE.

1. NARRATIVE. The three main classes of prose narrative are the *romance*, the *novel*, and the *short story*.¹

(1) THE ROMANCE. The prose romance of the Middle Ages differed from the poetic romance (see p. 412) only in that it was not metrical. Malory's *Morte Darthur* is a good example. With the growth of the novel, however, in the eighteenth century, there came a further development of romance in the so-called *romantic novel*. It followed the novel in its careful construction of plot centering in a crisis, but it continued to deal with unreal adventures. In the nineteenth century the name came to be applied to almost any novel which dealt mainly with adventure; the adventure no longer had to be unreal but merely unusual, out of the ordinary reader's experience. Scott's *Waverley Novels*, Charles Reade's *Cloister and the Hearth*, and

¹ *History* and *biography* are largely narrative, but they are so much else that they are here put in a special class.

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Stevenson's *Treasure Island* are good examples of the romantic novel.

(2) THE NOVEL. Between the romantic novel and the novel there is no clear distinction; indeed, any long prose story is called a novel nowadays. The essential difference, however, between the novel and the romance is that the novel deals with situations which are real or might be real. It usually tends, moreover, to select and arrange its material in a definite plot, in contrast to the loose succession of events in the old romance. Sometimes, as in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, development of the story depends almost wholly on plot; sometimes, as in Thackeray's *The Newcomes*, almost wholly on the characters; sometimes, as in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, on the interdependence of the two. The novel, then, is usually realistic, based on fact rather than on imagination; and this distinction applies even to the modern romantic novel, which deals with characters who, though out of our experience, seem as if they would be real could we actually know the remote conditions in which they are pictured.

The novel, as a special form of literature, begins with Richardson and Fielding in the middle of the eighteenth century. Important names in the development of this form of fiction are Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Charles Reade, Charles Kingsley, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Trollope, Meredith, and Stevenson.

(3) THE SHORT STORY. A short story differs from a novel in that its brevity forces on it the treatment of a single incident. If there is a plot, it must have only one main point, and much preliminary matter must be omitted. The ending, similarly, must be swift; the incident finished, there is no call, as often in the novel, for an elaborate conclusion. Again, character may not be *developed* as in the novel; a single phase or condition of a character must be portrayed; the author begins with the characters as they are, not in introductory stages prophetic of what they are going to be. A short story, for example, might picture a person's change from stinginess to gener-

osity, but, though it might show him first stingy and then generous, the emphasis would have to be on the change or on a sudden, particular influence which wrought the change. The novel, on the other hand, might picture the gradual disappearance of his stinginess, under various cumulative influences. If the short story should attempt to do this, it would be merely a compressed novel — and probably unconvincing.

Though there have been short tales in all times, the wide popularity of the short story, as a special form of prose fiction, is comparatively modern. It is well illustrated by the works of Stevenson and Kipling.

2. PROSE DRAMA.¹ In the time of Shakespeare prose was frequently used in comedy, especially in the more farcical scenes, and was sometimes used in tragedy (cf. the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*). Until the eighteenth century, however, poetry was the chief style for drama of all sorts; then it gave place to prose in comedies (cf. Sheridan's *Rivals* and Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*). Poetry, on the other hand, continued the style for tragedy until comparatively recent times (cf. the plays of Browning and Tennyson). Now, however, though there is occasionally a poetic drama, as Stephen Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca*, practically all plays are written in prose (cf. the plays of Shaw, Pinero, Galsworthy, and Barrie).

3. THE ESSAY. Narrative and dramatic writings aim primarily to create characters or to tell a story through created characters; whatever is said to the reader is part of the story or play. An essay, on the other hand, talks directly to the reader; the author is as present as he is in lyric or didactic poetry. From its name, which means "trial," the essay does not suggest an exhaustive treatment of a subject; it is merely a short comment, either touching on some particular phase or covering the whole subject in only a general way. Bacon calls it "certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than

¹ For a definition of drama, see p. 413, under Poetry.

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curiously.”¹ The purposes of the essay naturally may be many: it may aim to amuse, or to instruct, or to prove a point, or to stir emotions, etc. The forms that it takes may be equally variable: it may be an explanation, as Tyndall’s essay on *Glacier Ice*; or an argument, as almost any editorial; or a brief statement of the author’s views, as Bacon’s essay on *Truth*; or a narrative, as Lamb’s essay on *Roast Pig*; and so on. Essays are frequently classified as *formal*, in which the writer employs a formal, dignified style, usually in the third person, and discusses a serious subject; and *familiar*, in which the author takes the “gentle reader” into his confidence and writes in an easy, conversational tone. The formal essay is generally intended to instruct or inspire; the familiar, to amuse,—or, if to instruct, only by gentle satire. A good example of the first is Macaulay’s *Essays*; of the second, Lamb’s *Essays of Elia*. An essay may be in verse, as Pope’s *Moral Essays*, but prose is naturally better suited to it.

Roger Ascham, in the middle of the sixteenth century, was the first to consider English a fit language for prose essays, but he did not apply that name² to his writings, and Bacon’s *Essays*, fifty years later, were the first great writings of the kind in English. From then on the essay grew slowly in importance till the newspaper and the magazine made a special opportunity for it. The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* of the early eighteenth century were followed by many similar essays, and in the nineteenth century, as prose grew in importance, many prominent writers entered the field. Lamb, Hazlitt, Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, Thackeray, Arnold, and Stevenson are some of the chief names.

4. SPECIAL CLASSES OF PROSE. An ORATION is practically an essay written to be spoken on a special occasion. Good examples are Milton’s *Areopagitica* and Burke’s *Speech on Conciliation*. HISTORY and BIOGRAPHY are also akin to es-

¹ In minute detail.

² The word was first used in its literary sense by Montaigne in 1571.

says,—in fact, both of them are often written in essay form; but they are frequently longer, that is, they may attempt to cover the whole subject minutely, and they differ from many essays in that their purpose is rarely literary—they are written to give information. In addition, most history and biography are largely narrative. Among the histories which have received distinction as permanent literature should be noted especially Carlyle's *French Revolution* and Macaulay's *History of England*, while Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and Lockhart's *Life of Scott* enjoy the same prominence as biography. Similar in purpose to history and biography are writings on science, philosophy, etc. Such writings, however, are too various to be classed under one head; the word TREATISE comes nearer, perhaps, than any other. A quite separate class of prose is LETTERS, which are written not only without literary purpose, but also without the intention of publication. They are therefore much more informal and personal than any other form of writing. Among writers whose letters have become permanent literature are Gray, Cowper, Horace Walpole, Byron, Lamb, Carlyle, Meredith, and Stevenson.

SUMMARY.

Classes of Poetry	1. Narrative.	(1) The Ballad.
		(2) The Epic.
		(3) The Romance
		(4) The Tale.
	2. The Lyric.	
	3. The Drama.	(1) Tragedy.
		(2) Comedy.
	4. The Idyll.	
	5. Didactic Poetry, Satire.	

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Classes of Prose	1. Narrative.	(1) The Romance.
		(2) The Novel.
		(3) The Short Story.
	2. The Drama.	
	3. The Essay.	
	4. Special Classes.	(1) The Oration.
		(2) History and Biography.
		(3) The Treatise.
		(4) Letters.

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH VERSE.

1. ACCENT. A verse, or single line of poetry, is distinguished from prose by its *rhythm*, the accent recurring at regular intervals throughout the line. Thus, in the line

The stag at éve had drúnk his fíll, [Scott
the accent falls on every second syllable.

In Old English verse the accent was determined by *stress*; that is, by the force with which the accented syllable was pronounced, not by the length (or *quantity*) of that syllable. This characteristic has remained the underlying principle of English verse, but ever since the French influence in Chaucer's time there has been an uncertain element of quantity in English poetry. For instance, in the line

You 'll héar the lóng-drawn thúnder, [Kipling
the length of the unaccented syllable *drawn* makes a great difference in the effect of the line, as may be readily seen by changing the verse to

You 'll hear the thunder booming.
Quantity, then, does play a part in English verse, but stress is the controlling factor, so much so that the number of unaccented syllables is comparatively unimportant.¹

2. KINDS OF METRICAL FEET. Each foot, or division, of verse contains one accented syllable. The name springs from the fact that in early poetry, which accompanied dancing, the

¹ For instance, in the lines

Bréak, bréak, bréak,
On thy còld grey stónes, O Séa! [Tennyson.
the three syllables of the first line are exactly equivalent to the seven syllables of the second.

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accented syllable was identical in time with the putting down of the foot. With such an accented syllable goes the unaccented syllable (or two), which corresponds to the raising of the foot. Thus the line,

But cōme, | thōu gód|dēss fáir | and frée, [Milton
has four feet, each consisting of an unaccented syllable (marked *˘*) followed by an accented syllable (marked *˙*).

In English verse there are four kinds of feet in common use:

(1) The IAMBUS (*˘˙*), as:

But cōme, | thōu gód|dēss fáir | and frée." [Milton

(2) The ANAPEST (*˘˘˙*), as:

The Aſsýr|iān cāme dōwn | líke thē wólſ | ōn thē fólđ.
[Byron

(3) The TROCHEE (*˙˘*), as:

Should yōu | ásk mē | whénce thēse | stóries.
[Longfellow

(4) The DACTYL (*˙˘˘*), as:

This ís thē | fórest pří|méval; thē | múrmúring | pínēs and
thē | hémlocks. [Longfellow

To break the monotony a trochaic foot is often introduced into an iambic line, as:

Whén tō | thē sés|sions ōf | swēet sí|lent thought;
[Shakespeare

while iambus and anapest are frequently substituted for each other, as:

Whén thē hóunds | ōf spring | āre ōn wín|ter's trāces.
[Swinburne

Furthermore, the PYRRHIC (*˘˘*) and the SPONDEE (*˙˙*), two classical feet, which depend more on quantity than on stress, are used to good effect in the middle of a line, though neither is ever used in English as the regular, recurring foot. The third foot of the iambic line,

Whén tō | thē sés|sions ōf | swēet sílent thought,
[Shakespeare

is a pyrrhic; if it were iambic, we should have to put an absurd emphasis on the word *of*. A good example of a spondee is the third foot of the line,

And wĕre | thĕ wind's | fĕet shine | ǎlong | thĕ sea.

[Swinburne]

Coleridge, in *Metrical Feet*, written to teach his son Derwent, illustrates each kind of foot in the one poem:

Tróchee | tríps fróm | lóng tǒ | shórt;

From long to long in solemn sort

Slów Spón|deé stalks; | stróng foot; | yea ill able

Évĕr tǒ | cóme up with | Dáctyl trí|sylláble.

Íam|bics márch | fróm shórt | tǒ lóng; —

With ǎ léap | ǎnd ǎ bound | thĕ swíft Án|ǎpests thróng.

3. METER. The meter, or measure, of a verse is determined by the number of feet in that verse. Thus **DIMETER** means two-measure:

The trúm|pĕt's loud clán|góur¹

Excítes | ús tǒ árms;

[Dryden]

TRIMETER means three-measure:

And ǎll | thĕir éc|hōes móurn;

[Milton]

TETRAMETER means four-measure:

The stág | ǎt éve | hǎd drúnk | hĭs fíll;

[Scott]

PENTAMETER means five-measure:

The quá|l|ítý | ǒf mĕr|cý ís | nǒt stráined;

[Shakespeare]

HEXAMETER means six-measure:

ǎ shíeld|ēd scút|cheón blúshed | wĭth blóod | ǒf quéens |
and kíngs.

[Keats]

¹ At the end of an iambic or anapestic line there is frequently an extra unaccented syllable, while trochaic and dactylic verses are often without the last light beat.

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4. **MELODY.** Besides the variations in the arrangement of metrical feet, important factors in producing the melody, or pleasing sound, of verse are the pause (or cesura), rime,¹ and stanza.

(1) **CESURA.** Though the pause is not so important in English verse (stressed) as in Latin verse (quantitative), every line, if properly read, should have a slight pause somewhere in the line — varying in good poetry according to the sense and the arrangement of the feet. The cesura in the following verses is marked by double lines (||):

Yet all experience || is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, || whose margin fades
 Forever and forever || when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, || to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, || not to shine in use!

[Tennyson]

In the first and third of these lines the pause, with no additional delay for punctuation, is of course briefer than in the others. Exactly how long the reader should pause in a given line is largely a matter of ear; but constant practice, with careful attention fixed on the author's meaning and on the metrical rhythm, will help any one who is not entirely lacking in a sense of time.

(2) **RIME.** Rime is the similarity of sounds, as *knee* — *sea*. It is most commonly met at the ends of verses, as in the lines:

By shallow rivers, to whose *falls*
 Melodious birds sing *madrigals*; [Marlowe.]

but it is often introduced into the middle of a line, as in:

And *sweep* through the *deep*. [Campbell.]

This kind of rime, which depends on the similarity of vowel and final consonant, came into English verse from the French,

¹ *Rime*. Sometimes spelled *rhyme* — a spelling which came from a confusion of the word *rime* with the word *rhythm*. Both spellings, *rime* and *rhyme*, are now in good use.

who developed it from *assonance*, or similarity of vowel sound, whatever the consonant. Thus *roaming* and *floating* make good assonance, but do not rime as we now understand the word. Assonance, however, though it is no longer used at the ends of lines, is still a most important feature of good verse. Notice, in the following verses, the effect gained by the recurring *o* and *u* sounds in the accented syllables:

Who gave you *your* invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your *fury*, and your *joy*,
Unceasing thunder and eternal *foam*?" [Coleridge]

A more common aid to melody is *alliteration*,¹ or the repetition of similar consonant sounds. An obvious example is:

the long-backed breakers croon
Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked lagoon.
[Kipling]

More pleasant, because not excessive, is the alliteration in:

Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of
man. [Tennyson]

(3) A STANZA is a group of lines arranged in a fixed order of rimes. Thus the following four verses make a stanza:

It is an ancient mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?" [Coleridge]

It will be noticed that the first and third lines are iambic tetrameter unrimed and that the second and fourth are iambic trimeter *rimed*. The form of a stanza is determined by these two factors—the meter and the rime. A new stanza begins with a repetition of the same metrical arrangement.²

5. KINDS OF VERSE. The verse of a particular poem

¹ "Beginning-rime," the only kind of rime in Anglo-Saxon verse.

² Less than four verses are rarely called a stanza.

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can always be indicated by naming the predominating foot and the number of feet in the line, as "Trochaic Tetrameter," "Iambic Pentameter," etc. Certain combinations, however, have been used so much and so well that they have been given special names. The chief of these are:

(1) BALLAD STANZA. Four iambic verses, of four and three feet alternately, rimed on the second and fourth verses.¹ The above quotation under *stanza* is an example. Ballad stanza, however, is the simplest, least conventional of verse-forms and is frequently varied, by internal rime, by rime on the first and third lines, as well as on the second and fourth, and an extra verse or two. For instance:

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail! [Coleridge

Ballad stanza took its name, of course, from the old ballads. It has ever since been the favorite form for popular poetry and, except for the eighteenth century, it is found extensively from Chaucer to the present day. (See Appendix A. p. 410.)

(2) OCTOSYLLABICS. Iambic tetrameter riming in couplets (4, 4, aa), as:

But, O sad virgin, that thy power	a
Might raise Musæus from his bower,	a
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing	b
Such notes as, warbled to the string,	b
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,	c
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.	c

[Milton

Octosyllabics were very much used in the metrical tales and romances of the Middle Ages. Chaucer used them in *The*

¹ Hereafter we shall designate the feet by a number and the rime-scheme by letters. Ballad stanza, then, would be: 4, 3, 4, 3, for the meter; and a, b, c, b, for the rime.

Romaunt of the Rose, *The Hous of Fame*, and *The Dethe of Blaunche*; we find them popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the best-known examples are Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*), and again used with great success in such poems as Scott's *Lady of the Lake* and Byron's *Mazeppa*.

(3) HEROIC VERSE. Iambic pentameter, the measure most commonly used in long serious poems, as dactyllic hexameter was the "heroic" verse of the ancients.

Though any unrimed verse is *blank verse*, the name is now usually applied in English only to *unrimed heroic verse*. Technically, a single iambic pentameter line which does not rime is blank verse, as:

I lay my knife and fork across my plate.

To blank verse that deserves the name, however, there is a kind of indefinite stanza, impossible to define because it is always variable; and just a succession of unrimed iambic pentameter lines are not good blank verse. A given line in the middle of the "period," or variable stanza, may be almost impossible to scan by itself, but together with the other lines it should "go" all right. Compare the following passage, in which the ninth line,

"In the beginning how the heavens and earth,"

has no metrical value unless it is read as part of the period of sixteen lines to which it belongs; and notice how the group comes round, at the end, to regular iambic pentameter:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth

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Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. [Milton]

Blank verse was first used by Surrey (1517-1547) in his translation of part of the *Æneid*. It was not successfully used, however, till Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587). Soon after, it became the regular meter for the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare and his contemporaries; and Milton, in the middle of the seventeenth century, championed it as the proper measure for serious poetry, "in longer works especially." Eclipsed during the closed couplet days of Dryden and Pope, it came to its own again towards the end of the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth has been much used, if not always well; best perhaps by Keats in *Hyperion* and by Tennyson in *The Idylls of the King*.

Heroic verse is frequently rimed alternately (abab) in stanzas of four lines; for example:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,	a
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,	b
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,	a
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.	b

[Gray]

Rimed in couplets, it is usually called the *heroic couplet*, but this name applies properly only to the "closed" couplet of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the heroic verse of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, though rimed in couplets, is not the heroic couplet (see p. 284).

Heroic verse rimed in couplets has been popular ever since Chaucer. For a while, just before Marlowe's influence was felt, it was the regular meter of the drama and was used much by Shakespeare in his early plays. Under Dryden and Pope,

who followed French models, it was written with a precision and a balance that gave it the special name of the "heroic couplet." Again, but with more freedom, it was used effectively by Keats in *Endymion*.

Heroic verse rimed in other ways than in couplets is so common that a few instances must suffice: Chaucer's seven line "Rime Royal" (ababbcc) in his *Troilus*; the "Ottava Rima" (abababcc), well illustrated by Byron's *Don Juan*; the alternate rime of Gray's *Elegy* (abab); the arrangement of Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (aaba); and two forms, "Spenserian Stanza" and the "Sonnet," especially mentioned below.

(4) SPENSERIAN STANZA. Nine lines, the first eight of which are iambic pentameter, while the last is iambic hexameter. The rime-scheme (ababbcbcc) may be seen from the following selection:

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;	a
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,	b
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,	a
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:	b
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,	b
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:	c
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,	b
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails	c
To think how they may ache in icy hood and mails.	c

[Keats]

The Spenserian Stanza is named after Spenser, who, in his *Faerie Queen*, was the first to use it. It was not used much again till the Romantic revival, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Byron's *Childe Harold*, Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*, Shelley's *Adonais*, and the introductory verses to Scott's *Lady of the Lake* are the best examples in nineteenth century verse.

(5) THE SONNET. Fourteen iambic pentameter lines arranged either in three quatrains with a couplet (abab, cdcd,

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efef, gg) or in two parts, an octave (abba, abba; sometimes abba, cddc) and a sestet (variously rimed; commonly cdecde and cdcddc). The first of these forms is called the "Shakespearean Sonnet," because made popular, though not invented, by Shakespeare. An example is:

That time of year thou may'st in me behold	a
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang	b
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,	a
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.	b
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day	c
As after sunset fadeth in the west,	d
Which by and by black night doth take away,	c
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.	d
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire	e
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,	f
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,	e
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.	f
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more	
strong,	g
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.	g

[*Shakespeare*]

The other form is the "true" sonnet, following the model of the Italian Petrarch. An example is:

It is not to be thought of that the flood	a
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea	b
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity	b
Hath flow'd, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"—	a
Roused though it be full often to a mood	a
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,—	b
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands	b
Should perish; and to evil and to good	a
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung	c
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:	d
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue	c
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold	d

Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung c
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold. d

[Wordsworth]

The sonnet was first used in English by Wyatt and Surrey, whose poems were published in 1557, and was due to the Italian influence that came with the Renaissance (see p. 83). It flourished, especially in the hands of Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but, like many other forms, was eclipsed by the heroic couplet during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Revived by the Romantic poets, it has been well written in the nineteenth century, especially by Wordsworth, Keats, and Rossetti.

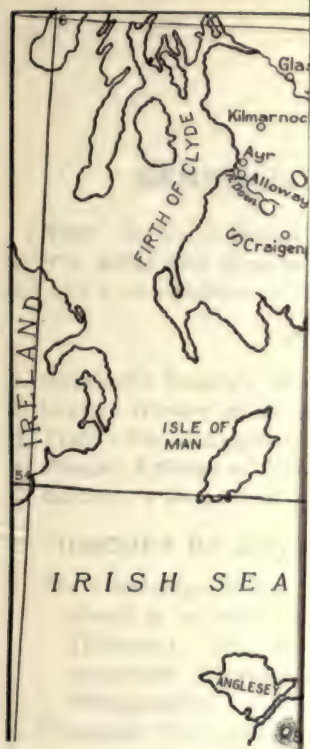
(6) MINOR AND IRREGULAR FORMS. Besides the well-known kinds of verse, there are many minor forms, such as *roundel*, *rondcau*, *triolet*, which have not been very widely used. In addition, there are innumerable *irregular* forms, used chiefly in lyric poetry, especially in such poems as Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*. These arbitrary stanzas are of course too variable to be classified.

SUMMARY.

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| 1. Accent | { | (1) Stress |
| | | (2) Quantity |
| 2. Chief Metrical Feet | { | (1) Iambus |
| | | (2) Anapest |
| | | (3) Trochee |
| | | (4) Dactyl |
| 3. Meter | { | (1) Dimeter |
| | | (2) Trimeter |
| | | (3) Tetrameter |
| | | (4) Pentameter |
| | | (5) Hexameter |

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 4. Melody | { (1) Cesura
(2) Rime
(3) Stanza | { a. End-rime
b. Assonance
c. Alliteration |
| 5. Kinds of Verse | { (1) Ballad Stanza
(2) Octosyllabics
(3) Heroic Verse
(4) Spenserian Stanza
(5) The Sonnet
(6) Minor and Irregular Forms | { a. Blank Verse
b. Heroic Couplet
c. Other Forms

{ a. Shakespearean
b. Petrarchan |





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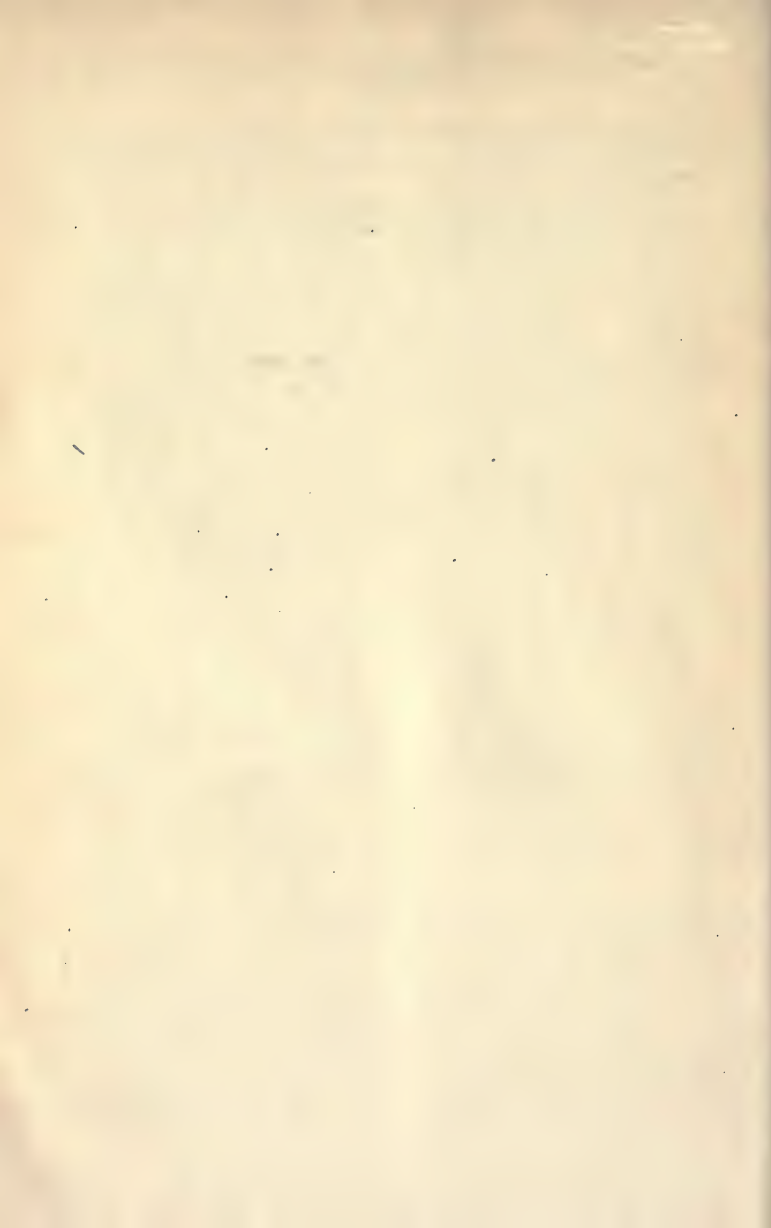
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